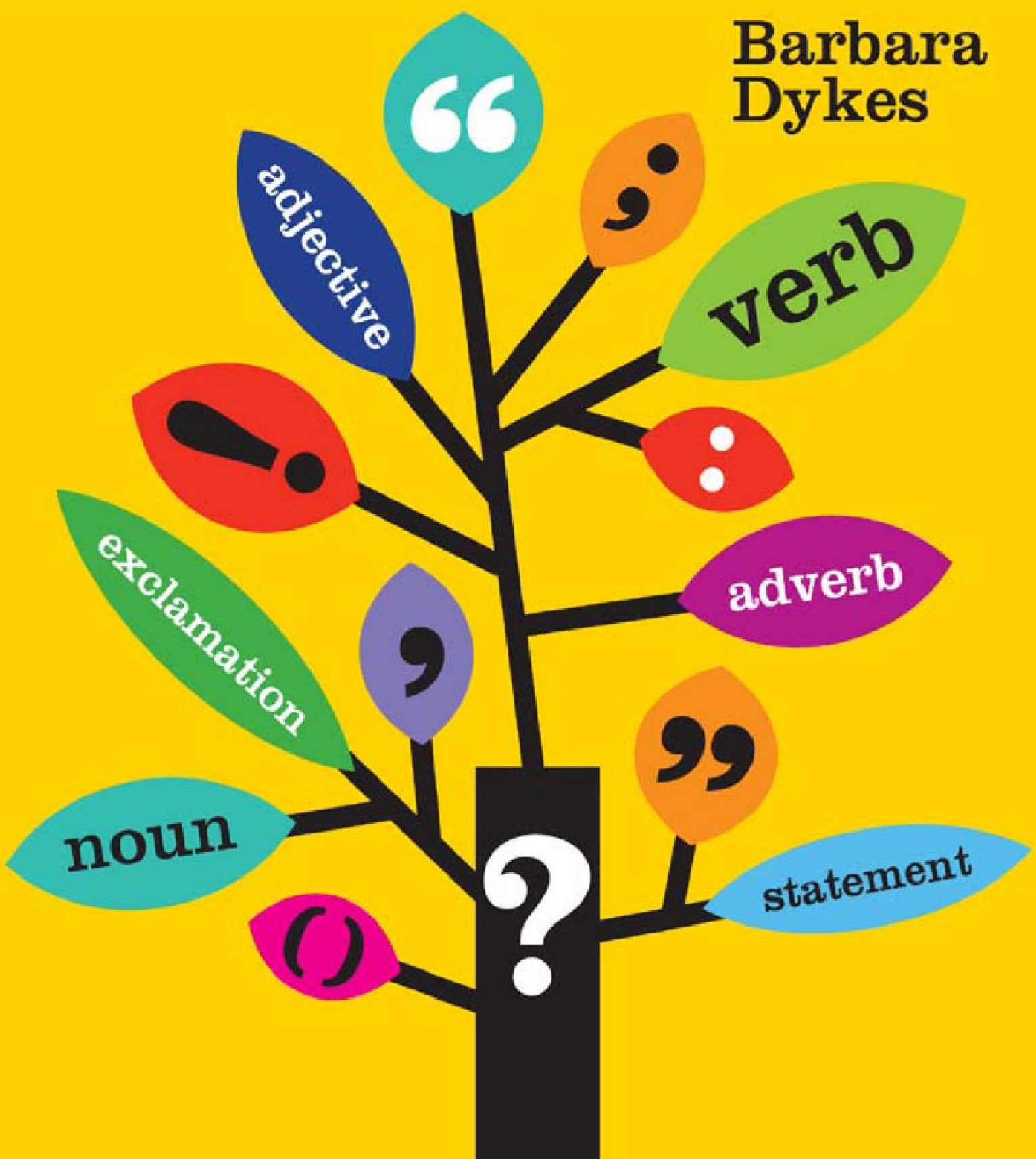
Grammar for Everyone

Practical tools for learning and teaching grammar

Barbara Dykes



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Foreword

After four years as Minister for Education, Science and Training, I now have the responsibility of focusing on Defence. These days my office walls are covered with photos of service men and women and souvenirs from visits to battlefields and bases.

But the largest portrait in my Canberra office is still of someone I have the highest admiration for and who continues to remind me of what is really important – the late Neville Bonner.

Born and raised in extreme poverty, Neville Bonner said the turning point in his life was the advice he received at age 14 from his grandmother, who told him that if he learned to read and write, communicate well and treat other people with decency and courtesy, that it would take him a long way.

Neville Bonner went on to become the first Indigenous member of the Federal Parliament, from where he not only served his country, but helped break down barriers within it.

If information is the currency of democracy, how can Australians participate unless they are able to read and write?

In December 2005, I launched the findings of the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy. As mentioned in this inquiry, around 8% of Year 3 students and around 11% of Year 5 students are not achieving the minimum National Benchmarks for Reading.

It noted the obvious correlation between poor literacy and under-achievement, and consequent adverse affects on individuals and society, including problems with self-esteem, mental health, substance abuse and crime.

The inquiry noted the critical importance of teachers. But it also concluded that, unfortunately, the systematic support for classroom teachers to build the appropriate skills to teach reading effectively is inadequate.

The Australian Council *for* Educational Research plays an important role in creating and disseminating knowledge and providing tools that can be used to improve learning. Barbara Dykes is to be commended for the outstanding job she has done with this excellent publication.

As its name suggests, *Grammar for Everyone* seeks to provide practical tools for learning and teaching grammar – for everyone.

Grammar for Everyone provides a thorough reference guide for the different types of word, guidance for correct punctuation, instruction for optimal sentence structure and advice for a correct, clear and persuasive way to speak and write. Most importantly, *Grammar for Everyone* offers excellent advice for those in a position to teach others.

Australia must be a nation that values learning, has the highest admiration for those who teach and gets behind those who provide knowledge and research that can help students and teachers alike.

Australia is a wonderful country, with so much to offer. We must do everything we can to make sure all Australians can read, write and communicate well, so that they can reach their full potential, take advantage of the many opportunities available to them and fully participate in our society.

The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson MP

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Dedication

To my daughter and business partner Sarah,
who is my constant supporter and critic.
And to Gavin, also our business partner,
supporter and friend.

Acknowledgment

Thank you to my husband John who suffers my long
work hours and sometime distraction!
and Karen Pennell, my patient and efficient typist who
reads my handwriting remarkably well.
Also I acknowledge all of our Quantum Literacy Tutors,
supporters and friends, who have been enthusiastically
awaiting the book.



Part I

Teaching grammar

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Grammar – background and history

Grammar instruction

The word 'grammar' often invokes a negative reaction in both teachers and students. Many teachers have come through a period in which grammar was neglected; for others, grammar has been taught in a haphazard way. What has brought about this situation?

During the 1960s and 70s, many believed that traditional elements of scholarship should be updated to suit the practices of contemporary education. There followed a period of uncertainty. No one was sure whether grammar instruction should take place or not. Often, if they believed it should, the new curriculum failed to allow it.

However, many in the profession believed that the absence of grammar instruction was contributing to a lowering of literacy levels. As a return to the grammar instruction courses of the past would be unacceptable, a supposed solution was devised – a system which became known as new or functional grammar. This system involved the generalisation of grammatical terms, and stressed the function that language performs, rather than the parts of speech described in traditional grammar.

But before the age of 12 or 13 – long after the need for basic grammar tuition – children do not normally begin to think in abstract terms. No wonder that both parents and teachers complained that the children disliked 'new' grammar, while they themselves found it difficult to follow.

David Crystal, author of *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*, wrote, 'In the popular mind, grammar has become difficult and distant, removed from real life, and practised chiefly by a race of shadowy people (grammarians) whose technical apparatus and terminology require a lengthy novitiate before it can be mastered … It is a shame because the fundamental point about grammar is so very important and so very simple.' The final statement is the significant one. We need to show that grammar need not be dry or tedious, but can be both fascinating and relevant.

Some of you may have received no grammar instruction at all; others may have been offered it in a random fashion, eclipsing its true function. Grammar provides a whole cohesive system concerning the formation and transmission of language. The question is, how do we pass on this knowledge? Firstly we need to understand it ourselves and, even better, develop that passion and enthusiasm in our students.



I trip (verb) over the rug (noun) and then you say I'm clumsy (adjective)!

What is grammar?

We all use grammar from the time that we can speak in intelligible sentences, because grammar deals with 'the abstract system of rules in terms of which a person's mastery of his native language can be explained.'[1] We assume that it all happens naturally and are only confronted with the need to understand and define how English works when we learn another language or attempt to teach English to others.

So how might we define grammar? The simplest and perhaps the truest definition is 'a language to talk about language'. Just as one cannot explain how a motor engine functions (or is failing to function) without naming words for its parts and their specific actions, so it is impossible to explore the function of words and the part they play in forming meaningful language without a naming procedure.

It is impossible, for example, to offer a meaningful explanation for why we say 'did it well' rather than 'did it good' if there is no shared understanding of the language for talking about language – to explain that 'good' being an adjective qualifies a noun, e.g. 'He did a good job,' but 'well', an adverb, is used for adding meaning to a verb, e.g. 'He did it well.'

The history of grammar

Whatever subject we are teaching, it becomes more interesting and meaningful, both to us and to our students, when we know something about its origin and history. This is no less true of grammar.

The word 'gramma' meaning 'letter' has come down to us in a path through several languages. In early times, the craft of using letters and constructing messages with the use of symbolic markings was seen to indicate magical powers, causing some early

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1 Crystal, D., 1995, *The Cambridge encyclopaedia of the English language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

scholars to be seen as dealers in witchcraft and consequently eyed with suspicion. The word 'glamour', meaning a deceptive charm, derived from the same source. However, in modern usage this word has lost much of its detrimental connotation.

Of course, no one invented grammar – it was there all along, an intrinsic part of the first meaningful speech uttered by human beings and, likewise, of their first meaningful writings. But at some point, interested scholars were inspired to make a study of it and its systems, both for their own better understanding and to enhance the language skills of their students – the same aim that we, as teachers, have today.

The study of grammar is believed to have its origins in both India and Greece. In India it was for the study of recited forms of Sanskrit, and in Greece for the study of written language. It is the latter that provides the source of our own studies.

Grammar and literacy are intrinsically bound. One of the first to formulate a system of grammar was Dionysus Thrax, from Alexandria. His 'The Art of Letters' required students to first learn their letters in strict order (just as we do with our alphabet), then proceed to letter combinations, forming syllables in increasing length, from simple to complex word forms. Thrax's grammar, which he defined as 'technical knowledge of the language of poets and writers', established a model for the teaching of all European languages.

Through the following centuries, various scholars have set their own mark on the development of grammatical thought. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates realised the importance of grammar for all forms of language expression, particularly public speaking (rhetoric) and debate. A Roman, Marcus Varre, produced 25 volumes on the subject, translating the Greek and then applying the grammar to Latin. Interest then spread around the world, with grammarians of other countries comparing the features of their languages with those of Latin.

The best-known early English grammarian was Ben Jonson, who also based his work on Latin. He made a particular study

of punctuation for which he had his own rather heavy versions adhering to the theory that one should punctuate as one wishes one's work to be read or orally delivered, as well as to determine meaning in a logical way.

Then the 1760s 'witnessed a striking outburst of interest in English Grammar'[2] and among the best-known grammars was that of Robert Lowth, a clergyman and later Bishop of London. Lowth sought to remedy the dearth of simple grammar textbooks, but he earned criticism for judging the language as well as describing it. His pedantic approach led to such oft-quoted prescriptions as the inappropriateness of ending a sentence with a preposition.

Lowth's work was followed by others, giving rise to the formulation of basic grammar principles and agreement on some points of usage. The principle of the supremacy of usage, which is still supported today, was established by Joseph Priestley, who stated: 'It must be allowed that the custom of speaking is the original and only just standard of any language.'[3]

In 1898, Nesfield and Wood co-authored the *Manual of English Grammar and Composition* which ran concurrently with Nesfield's 1900 text *An Outline Of English Grammar*. Certainly these would appear dull and tedious to most modern students, but they do, nevertheless, provide excellent detailed explanations for those of more linguistic bent.

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2 Baugh, Albert C, & Cable, Thomas 1987, *A history of the English language*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

3 ibid.

Teaching strategies for the contemporary classroom

Definitions and explanations

We know it – can we explain it? Because we know something, it does not follow that we can explain it to others – especially to a child who may learn in quite a different way from you – his teacher. For example, take the concept of a syllable. Most of us have some understanding of what a syllable is, but when asked to show how one would explain it to students you might get something like this:

'It's part of a word.'

But so is a letter!

'It's when you break it up ...'

Similarly for a letter. 'Try again,' you say.

'It's got a vowel in it.'

Better, but so has any word!

Eventually you put it all together to give an accurate definition: a unit of speech (consisting of) a word, or part of a word, containing one sounded vowel. Or for adult students: a segment of speech, uttered with one emission of breath (the breath is emitted with the sounding of the vowel).

So, to teach about syllables we need first to be sure that we understand what they are ourselves; then we need to put that information across in the best way to suit the age and stage of the students. This will require a full explanation of the definition, which can be done with practical demonstrations such as clapping, or feeling when the jaw drops for the utterance of the vowel.

Rule 1: Know your definition or at least have a good dictionary handy so you can check.
Rule 2: Remember to give your definition (as the dictionary does) in the same part of speech as the word being defined.
Rule 3: Keep the definition as simple as possible while maintaining all aspects essential to accuracy.
Rule 4: Discuss with examples to increase understanding and application.
Rule 5: Take note of words with two or more meanings, but the same spelling (homonyms) such as *chest*, *bulb*.
Rule 6: Practise! And use the words in both oral and written sentences.

Animating teaching strategies for all learning styles

Often the mistake is made of assuming that what seems to be a purely academic subject such as grammar can be taught only in a dry unimaginative way. But this is far from true. Awareness of the need for more active involvement in learning has come about with the greater understanding of how the brain works, and the accompanying recognition that people vary considerably in their learning modes. In addition, the importance of teaching to the whole brain through multisensory activities cannot be over-emphasised.

We know then that people learn in a variety of ways. Even within one family we often see that what works with one child may be useless for another. One may learn to read just by looking at letters or matching words and pictures; a more auditory child will absorb information principally by listening and repetition;

yet another needs motion and physical connection in order to 'inbuild' the information. So, while the more sedentary skills of reading and writing are an essential component of grammar education, active learning with kinetic exercises can play a vital part in reinforcement, especially with younger age groups.

By delivering instruction in a variety of creative ways, using all the channels to the brain, we are ensuring not only that all students can benefit, but also that they will enjoy their lessons.

Gender differences

Though it was probably never in doubt, research techniques show that boys, in general, are less inclined to sit at tasks for lengthy periods. They prefer, and need, more physical activity.[4] This may involve, firstly, varying activities centred on a learning unit and, secondly, allowing more short breaks or including creative activities for practice and reinforcement.[5] Sometimes, offering choices is a good strategy, particularly with a mixed class.

Confident language mastery

Developing confident language skills is arguably the most important outcome of our teaching procedure. The term 'language principles' refers to a body of core essentials for understanding and manipulating one's language, and indeed, learning a foreign one.

Certain principles govern the use of every language and relate to such things as word meaning (and accuracy), the arrangement of words or word groups in a sentence (syntax), stress given to certain parts of a word and, in most languages, the use of punctuation.

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4 Cole, Martin 2001, 'Equality boss hits special help for boys', Courier Mail, 22 February; House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002, *Boys: Getting it right*, report on the inquiry into the education of boys, [AGPS], Canberra.

5 Macmillan, Bonnie 1997, *Why schoolchildren can't read*, Institute of Economic Affairs, London.

Most modern languages have systems that indicate number (singular or plural) and tense (when something takes place, i.e. in the present, past or future). Another important distinction denotes the purpose of a statement, i.e. is it just a simple statement, asking a question or giving a command.

Intonation

It is important, too, to be aware of some of the principles, or at least guidelines for the way we use our voices and thereby convey the purpose of our utterance. It is easy to overlook the fact that we cannot use intonation in written communication – neither can we be asked to repeat or clarify it; our writing must convey all our intentions. Test the following passage by reading it in monotone.

> 'Hello Dad. Oh no! Mick's just fallen in the fishpond. Get out.'
> 'Help, help.'
> 'He can't. Get a rope. Quick!'
> 'Catch the rope. Good. How did you manage to fall in? Now I'm all wet.'

The same passage written without punctuation would be impossible to interpret accurately.

Ambiguity

As teachers, we need to be highly conscious of the potential for ambiguity that exists in a language like English, which depends heavily on word order for meaning. A typical kind of ambiguous sentence is that in which a clause is misplaced, for example: 'Sisters were united after 30 years in the check-out queue.' Instructions and examples need to be carefully monitored to avoid confusion, and students need to be made aware of this problem in their own writing and speaking.

Long-term memory

We always aim for our students to retain our teaching in the long-term memory. The human brain actually encompasses infinite memory but the secret of retrieval lies in how we record information in the first place.

We can use the analogy of a computer, which is itself designed to imitate the operation of the human brain. We know that we have to install a computer program in a totally accurate way; omitting even one dot may impede its function. Then once the program has been successfully installed, we are able to add information to its files and recall it at the click of a mouse.

As the human brain can store infinitely more information than any computer, we can see the importance of accurately filing the information that we want it to retain. By ensuring that our teaching follows a logical progression, we are enabling each detail to be filed systematically; only in that way do we establish a fully functioning system for recall.

The best time to learn

Looking at English books for seniors it seems amazing that students at this level are having phrases and clauses explained to them long after they should be manipulating them confidently and showing a high degree of language competence. No wonder they are bored and frustrated at what, to them, must seem belated and therefore irrelevant.

Ideally, this information should form a substantial part of the English curriculum in upper primary so that correct forms of sentence structure have been well practised by the time that the mature student needs to concentrate more on subject matter. Upper primary years can be perceived as the preparation time during which skills are honed, furnishing students with the ability to read and write competently in a variety of subject areas. Moreover, the junior student is far more receptive to training in the

basic mechanics of language, and while the teacher has an ongoing responsibility to coach and direct, the more mature mind should now be exploring more creative ways of manipulating language for a variety of purposes.

Structure the program

Because grammar is such a structured science, it is of the greatest importance that we teach it in a structured way. As it pertains to everyday speech and writing, to the visible and concrete as well as the abstract objects in life, it is not difficult to start grammar instruction in the third year of schooling. Once children have mastered the requirements of a sentence – that it 'starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop' – they have already been trained in two rudimentary principles of grammar.

Now we need to establish the foundation on which our structure is to be built, namely the parts of speech, and the terminology, definition and function of each one. The order in which we teach these also forms a logical sequence. Using the logical progression of simple to complex allows us to teach in easy steps whereby one concept fits on to the previous one to form a cohesive whole, just as by building brick by brick, we can construct a solid and stable wall.

As this book is designed for all teachers, including some who have learnt little or no grammar themselves, it is important that all detail is included. If you choose to skip, bear in mind that tips, activity suggestions and tutors' discoveries are all included.

Practical suggestions

First, provide all students with an exercise book in which to build up their own reference text.



Teaching and understanding concepts

Sometimes students will have a good idea about a concept long before they can put a name to it; for example, most will be well aware of tense long before they know the term or realise that there is one, simply because they are expressing it naturally in every statement they make. We teach these things so that they can talk about them, understand how to use them correctly and well, and know how to apply them to other languages.

Concepts are taught, ideally, when they arise naturally in context and teachers may take quick opportunities to divert attention to certain aspects that arise. This is not always possible in a demanding curriculum, and either way, some terms may be explained in a simple manner and discussed and practised more fully when they arise in the curriculum. For example, a child learns early that a sentence can consist of a noun and a verb. The verb must have a subject for it to make sense. The term 'predicate' can be explained later. It is true that children do like 'long' words but they should understand them and not be bogged down with them in a meaningless way.

Homework

Homework should always be brief in the early stages – never onerous. To be effective it should be based on the learning of the same day, providing revision and consolidation, bearing in mind that much of what we learn will be forgotten if not reinforced within 12 hours.

Introducing lessons

It is a good idea to vary the way in which you introduce a subject, especially if you are teaching reluctant students. Some students may be turned off by the mention of grammar, so be creative.

Rather than beginning your lesson with something like 'Today we are going to do verbs', you might plunge straight into an activity, the purpose of which is explained later. For example, you might ask the students to say what they did last evening or this morning before school. At the end of the discussion a list of the 'doing' words (verbs) mentioned could be made.

A discussion could evolve from asking students what they had for tea the day before. After all have had a turn, some of the answers could be written on the board.

Dan had curry and rice
Julie had *shepherds pie* etc.

Each answer forms the object of the sentence. To ensure that the lesson is remembered, the students might each write a sentence telling of something they would not like to have – the sentences to be read out. For example:

I would not like *snake's eggs*.
I would not like *squashed toad*.



Mediums and learning aids

Use a variety of mediums. Students enjoy writing on the board, writing on concrete with chalk, and making charts. Charts drawn on large sheets of project card can be laminated, then written on with erasable whiteboard markers.

Kinetic activities

Miming, acting skits and charades are all useful activities for reinforcing grammar concepts. They can be composed and performed in groups or acted spontaneously. These are important for kinetic learners and create memorable lessons.

Learning games

Much practice can be given by using containers from which students pick cards or pieces of paper. These could be printed with words or questions to be used and scored in numerous ways.

Wall charts/posters

These are always helpful and most effective when students make them themselves or help to make them. For example:

a.

Singular subject	**Object**	**Plural subject**	**Object**
I	me	we	us
you	you	you	you
he/she/it	him/her/it	they	them

b.

Adjective	**Noun**
wise	wisdom
wide	width
hot	heat

c.

Few (a number you can count)	**Less** (some you can't count)
eggs	rice
people	sand
slices	rain

Handouts

Use handouts with discretion. Ask yourself whether they will really have a learning outcome or are they just providing 'busy' work. They can be useful additions to student information, providing examples, summaries and reference material, but for maximum learning, discussion activities and constructing their own sentences and charts is important.

The end product of instruction should be greater knowledge and increased skill. For example, in teaching about adjectives the students need skill in using adjectives effectively in their own creative sentences. Circling words and filling in blanks provides little opportunity for the development of the imagination or improvement in writing expression – which should be the end product of successful teaching.



Part II

The parts of speech

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Introduction

It is easy to assume that secondary school students would already know what a noun is. But when the time comes to build on that knowledge, for example to investigate noun forms such as noun phrases and clauses and their role in the sentence, we realise that the foundation we are about to build on may itself be shaky.

Make sure to give a definition with a full explanation for each part of speech. Then follow with reinforcement activities geared to the level of the students. Practice exercises will reveal any deficiencies in their understanding.

Common and proper nouns are easy to understand by even the youngest students. Collective and abstract nouns, being less obvious, may be left a little longer or until they figure incidentally during teaching. By practising these terms, students are also enabled to increase their vocabulary and gain confidence from the ability to spell.

For each category about to be learnt, students should firstly be given, according to their age and learning level:

- a definition of the term, with discussion
- examples, preferably written on the board

The students, themselves, should then be able to:

- give the definition, i.e. correctly answer the question 'What is a …?'
- give examples (or word groups) in that category
- recognise examples in a sentence or list of words
- use each one correctly in a sentence

Older students may also learn the origins of the words, as given in the following definitions, or in a dictionary.

1 Nouns

Nouns mean every thing to us!

Definition: The word 'noun' comes from Latin *nomen* meaning 'name'. A noun is the name of a thing. Everything that exists has a name, whether you can see it or not. A blind person cannot see something, but that does not mean that it isn't there! It may only exist in our minds, like hope, beauty or calories.

There are four kinds of nouns.

Common nouns

These are names of everyday things that we can see, hear or touch. For example:

table, banana, volcano, song

We can put the word 'the' in front of them and make sense, as in:

the rope, **the** poison

If it does not make sense, the word cannot be a noun.

A 1.1 Activities: common nouns

Students could do the following:

1. Walk outside, touch and name things as they pass. This is especially popular with young children.
2. Walk outside. Come back in and name the things that they saw. In class, the children can take turns to name one thing without repeating any.

A

3. As above, then write down the things that they saw. Read the list aloud. Write the words on the board.
4. Using pictures of indoor or outdoor scenes provided, students name or list the objects they see in their picture. This activity is particularly popular with ESL students of any age.
5. Make sentences using some of the selected words, underlining each noun.
6. Play any form of the ever-popular parlour game 'The Old Oak Chest', in which students in turn name items found in the Old Oak Chest, each person repeating the list in its correct order and adding one item of their own. This game can be played in a variety of ways, such as naming articles bought at the market, or found under the Christmas tree.
7. List things beginning with letters in alphabetical order.

For their own reference, students should write a heading NOUNS in their grammar exercise books, followed by an accurate definition and several examples.

Checklist: common nouns

C

Students should now be able to:

- correctly answer the question 'What is a noun?'
- say one way to be sure that a word is a noun
- give examples of common nouns
- recognise nouns in sentences
- use each noun in a sentence

Proper nouns

Definition: The word 'proper' comes from the French word *propre* meaning one's own, i.e. belonging to a particular person or thing.

Proper nouns are the special names that we give to people, places and particular things like the days of the week, months of the year, or even the titles of books or TV shows.

For example:

Jason, Town Hall, China, French, The Wishing Chair

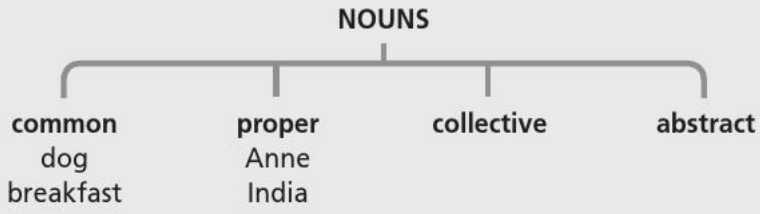
Because they are special and individual names, they start with a capital letter and, apart from people, most of these things have only one proper name.

1.2 Activities: proper nouns

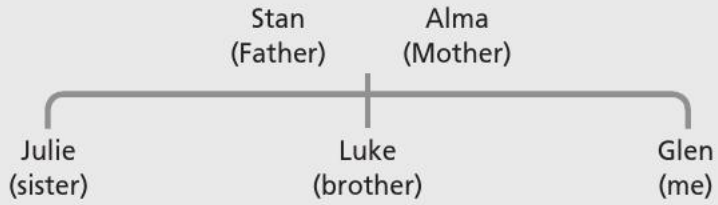
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Students could do the following:

1. Draw a large simple flowchart in their grammar exercise books. It should have four lines, since we have four kinds of nouns. We fill in the first two and add the remaining two later on.
   Students choose their own example to add below each class heading. Remember that all the proper nouns must start with a capital letter.



2. Name the members of their family. This may be done in the form of a family tree. For example:



3. Write answers naming, for example:
   a. a friend
   b. a fish

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c. a town
d. a horse
e. a book
f. a country
g. a famous person
h. a kind of car
i. a sportsperson
j. a building

4. Draw a real or imaginary 'mud map' and label it with names of streets. Add and label with a name: a bridge, a river, a person, a hill, a church, a shop and any more of their choice, such as a dog, a horse and so on.

Some of these exercises provide excellent group activities and can be done in teams, and on the board. Some exercises should always be done in the Grammar Exercise Book to serve for reference and for revision.

Collective nouns

Definition: These are names for groups of things, animals or people, which go together, or have something in common.
For example:

A number of people in a group singing is a choir.
A number of cows in a group is a herd.

Note here that if the group word is singular then the verb following must also be singular.
For example:

Correct – The choir *was* rehearsing in the chapel.
Incorrect – The choir *were* rehearsing in the chapel.

There may, of course, be more than one group. In which case the verb will be plural.

The choirs *were* competing in the final.

A 1.3 Activities: collective nouns

Children enjoy discovering the group names of various kinds of wildlife, while adults often come across them in quizzes and crossword puzzles.

1. Which team can answer first? Give the collective noun for:
   a. soldiers of a country (army)
   b. many people gathered in one place (crowd/mob)
   c. flowers (bunch)
   d. people in a play (cast)
   e. a group of sheep (mob)
   f. people in a line (queue)
   g. trees growing together (forest/wood/grove)
   h. piglets born together (litter)
   i. things thrown on top of one another (heap/pile/dump)
   j. knives, forks and spoons (cutlery)

   These questions can be asked and answered in writing and scored individually or in teams.
2. Students think of more collective nouns in a set time period.
3. Young students particularly, draw examples from the answers above. They should label their drawings with the correct collective nouns.
4. Students use a given number of the chosen nouns in sentences which are then read aloud. Humorous ones are very much enjoyed and most likely to be remembered.
5. Students research, using a dictionary, to find out the meaning of various words. They then write the thing that they apply to, for example:

   library – books for borrowing

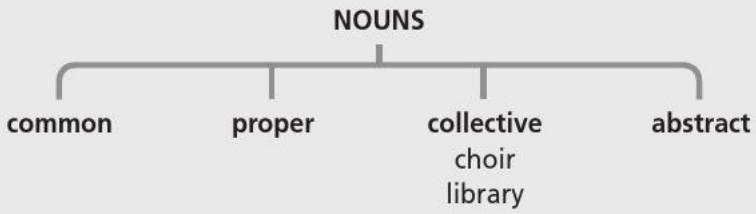
pack	fleet	pride	union
troop	train	council	formation
lineage	compendium		

6. Students choose a group word and act or mime it in the form of a charade, for others to guess, for example:

   audience – they act watching, clapping etc.

7. Students should now fill in the third leg of their flowchart in their grammar exercise books.

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Abstract nouns

Definition: Abstract nouns form what can be the most difficult group to understand, as they represent ideas, and have no physical substance that you can see or touch.
The idea may be of quality,

for example: beauty, greed, intelligence

or the idea may be a state that is felt or suffered,

for example: joy, misery, neglect.

It may be the act of something,

for example: duty, aggression.

It may even be an event or happening,

for example: conversation, pause.

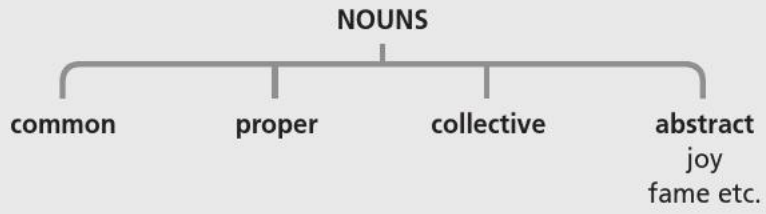
1.4 Activities: abstract nouns

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Scenarios explain these most clearly to children and they also enjoy acting them. They provide excellent opportunities for group discussion and the extension of vocabulary.

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1. What feeling would you have if …? (Students suggest suitable abstract nouns.)
   a. your internet connection kept bombing out
   b. you won an art competition
   c. you visited your friend in hospital and found her covered in bandages
   d. your favourite show was cancelled
   e. you were running late for your appointment
   f. the principal called you to the office
   g. your dog died
   h. you were invited to a wedding
   i. you found a cockroach in your dinner
   j. you saw Halley's Comet
2. Students describe an example of various acts. For example: an act of rudeness, willpower.
3. Students write an abstract noun for each of the following:
   The feeling you have when you are:
   a. afraid
   b. pleased
   c. grieving
   d. feeling sick
   e. sorry
   f. enjoying something
   g. tired
   h. worried
   i. angry
   j. hostile
   There may be more than one good answer in which case the choice can be discussed.
4. Students could write short skits and act them out to illustrate abstract nouns such as those in 2 and 3 above.
5. Now students should fill in the fourth and last leg of the flowchart in their grammar exercise books.



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Revision of nouns

Many of the activities are suitable for homework. They should always provide an expansion or consolidation process following class work. For example, words could be picked during class time for sentences to be written at home, or skits may be written for acting in school.

1.5 Activities: revision of nouns

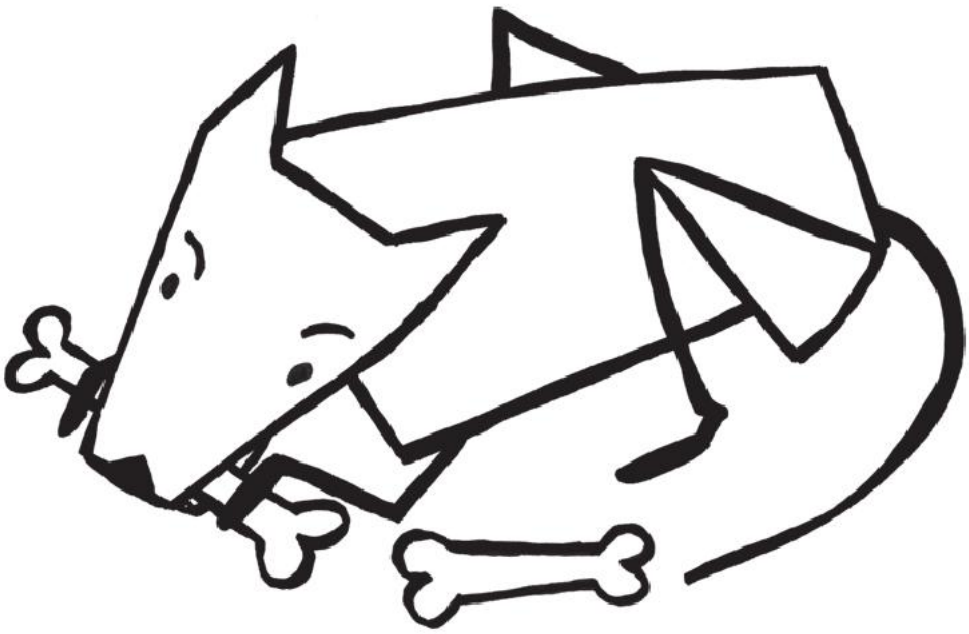
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These activities are very popular.

1. Have a large number of small cards (say 5 x 6 cm) with nouns from every category printed, one on each. The cards are placed in a container in the centre of the group. Students in turn take one card from the container, read the word aloud and say which kind of noun it is, common, proper, collective or abstract.
   If the answer is correct, the student keeps hold of the card, if not it is returned to the container. The student or team who claims the most correctly answered cards wins.
2. Students in turn take one card (or a given number) from the container. They write the word in their exercise book, name the category and write a sentence using it correctly. They underline the noun. This activity can also be done orally. It keeps the class alert!

bones common noun	My dog loves to chew **bones**.
heat abstract noun	We felt the **heat** as the hut burnt down.

3. Students are presented with a passage from a story they are reading and point out or write down the nouns they can find in it.



My dog loves to chew bones.

Things we can say about nouns

At the risk of offending some scholars, it seems pedantic to insist on the retention of Latin and Greek plurals for common words which are clearly now part of our language, just as many words absorbed from other languages over past centuries now conform to English usage.

It seems therefore logical that the plural of *curriculum* and *syllabus* should be *curriculums* and *syllabuses*. But both forms are acceptable and should not be corrected.

Greek and Latin for medical, botanical and other scientific terms is favoured and the unscholarly person's answer to this is to come up with everyday readily recognisable names, such as dove (Greek *ptilinopus*) and daylily (*Hermerocallis*).

Number

Number tells us whether there is just one thing or more than one. In English the formation of plurals is simpler than in many other languages.

It is a good idea, especially for younger and ESL students, to explain the various ways in which we make plurals, as they can cause some confusion.

1. For most nouns, we just add 's' to form the plural.
   For example:

one hat	two hats
one fire	five fires

2. For some words it is difficult to add 's' alone – try saying *box* with just 's' on the end. For such words, we insert the vowel sound 'e' for ease of pronunciation.
   For example:

one box	two boxes
one lunch	two lunches

3. Although our language has been simplified in many ways over time, some old forms have stayed, largely due to earlier pronunciation. Among these are a number of words in which the inside vowel changes between singular and plural. These just have to be learnt.
   For example:

one man	two men
one mouse	three mice

4. We also have plurals made by adding 'en'.
   For example:

one chick	ten chickens
one ox	a team of oxen

   Other examples of irregular plurals include:

child	children
die	dice
leaf	leaves
sheep	sheep
woman	women

foot	feet
goose	geese

ESL students need to learn these especially, as they may not be familiar with hearing them spoken.

Gender

Gender is a grammatical term for classifying nouns according to masculine, feminine or neuter. The classification is largely irrelevant in English, which does not attribute gender to inanimate objects. Many languages do, however, for no obvious reason. *For example:*

in French we have *la chaise* (feminine) meaning chair
but *le tabourer* (masculine) meaning stool
la pierre (feminine) meaning stone
but *le roc* (masculine) meaning rock

Note, too, how the article (the word for 'the') in these examples has a feminine and a masculine form. We are fortunate then that the English gender generally speaks for itself and we have few alternative forms. Many former distinctions have become blurred in modern times, even politically incorrect, so that we seldom refer to an actress or an authoress as opposed to actor or author. In some respects this is a pity as a 'unisex' term provides less information.

1.6 Activities: number and gender

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These exercises are particularly useful for young children and ESL students and provide useful spelling practice, too.

1. Students make two columns, headed Singular and Plural, in their grammar exercise books. Dictate words which the students write in the appropriate column. They then add the counterpart of each word in the other column. Useful words for this exercise include those that sound like plurals such as:

loops, men, maze, jacket, tax, hose, coach, children, mouse, fleas, doses

2. The same activity can be used to practise gender, adding a third column for 'Neuter' and a fourth for 'Either' (masculine or feminine), for example:

Masculine	**Feminine**	**Neuter**	**Either**
king	queen	throne	monarch

Others may include tyrant, master, leader, princess, ancestor, mechanic, pilot, uncle, blessing, conductor.

Some words have a technical definition of neuter but carry a gender by custom, for example: a ship is often referred to as 'she'. These provide an interesting subject for discussion.

3. Exercises 1 and 2 can be done orally.
4. Students are given sentences in the singular which they then translate into plural.

   Reminder: It should still make sense!

   a. The old woman (women) carried her (their) bag (bags) across the street (streets).
   b. A mouse (mice) ate a hole (holes) in my (our) Dad's sock (socks).
   c. I (we) still have a bit (bits) of glass in my (our) foot (feet).
   d. His (their) brother (brothers) is (are) painting the roof (roofs) of my (our) house (houses).
   e. A fly (flies) fell in her (their) glass (glasses) of juice.
5. Students are given sentences in the plural which they then translate into singular.
   a. The ladies (lady) still have (has) our (my) buckets (bucket) weeks (a week) after the fires (fire).
   b. John's friends (friend) are (is) going to school on their (his/her) horses (horse).
   c. Naughty children (a naughty child) pushed them (he/she/it) into the puddles (puddle).
   d. Our (my) sisters (sister) bought ice-creams (an ice-cream) with their (her) pocket money.

Case

Case is a term which classifies all nouns and pronouns according to the function that each one has in a given sentence. As this classification is relevant only for discussing such functions in advanced language study and for the study of foreign languages, case will be discussed at a later stage (see page 150).

Checklist: nouns

C

Can the student now:

- define the term noun in clear and simple words
- give an explanation of each category of nouns so far studied
- give examples of each type of noun
- state one way by which you can recognise a noun
- differentiate confidently between the categories
- correctly select nouns from a list of words or a passage and name the kind
- state things that can be said about a noun and give appropriate examples

Pronouns

2

So we don't repeat ourselves!

Definition: The word 'pronoun' comes from the Latin *pronomen* meaning 'for a noun'. As the word implies, pronouns are the words that we use *in place of* nouns. It will become clear later when we discuss the difference between possessive and demonstrative pronouns and possessive and demonstrative adjectives (see pages 38, 53), why this definition is so important.

We use pronouns to make clear whom or what we are talking about, while avoiding confusing or clumsy repetition.

It is wise to teach just personal pronouns initially and bring in the other kinds later. Recognition is important while fuller explanation and exercises can follow later (see pages 139–42).

Before learning about pronouns, students should:

- understand the term noun
- recognise both common and proper nouns

Personal pronouns

Share this story with your students. This (true) story could sound something like the following.

> 'Marjorie lost her false teeth. The dog had found Marjorie's false teeth and buried Marjorie's false teeth. Marjorie could not find Marjorie's false teeth anywhere, but Marjorie dug up Marjorie's false teeth two years later, while Marjorie was digging in the garden.'

With the use of pronouns this would read much more smoothly, in spite of the repetition of the pronouns. Although equally important to the sense, they are less prominent.

'Marjorie lost her false teeth. The dog had found *them* and buried *them*. Marjorie could not find *them* anywhere, but *she* dug *them* up two years later, while *she* was digging in the garden.'

Without the words 'I' and 'you' (personal pronouns) we could become very confused. Instead of:

I saw her give you the letter for me.

We would have to say something like this:

John saw Maureen give Michael the letter for John. [John, referring to himself!]

And:

I hurt myself.

Would become:

John hurt John. [himself or another person called John?]

It becomes altogether very confusing!

Most languages have pronouns, though in some languages the pronoun is incorporated in the verb.

Pronouns change in form according to the work that they do in the sentence. For example they have number:

Singular – *I* went to town with *him*.
Plural – *We* went to town with *them*.

Tables can be very useful, both now and for later reference, so we suggest that students begin by entering a table of personal pronouns in their grammar exercise books.

Personal pronouns	Singular	Plural
1st person (the person/s speaking)	I	we
2nd person (the person/s spoken to)	you	you
3rd person (the person/s or things being spoken about)	he/she/it	they

And when the action is done *to* the person, for example:

	Singular	Plural
	me	us
	you	you
	he/she/it	them

The falling brick hit *me*.

a. Following a preposition: These will be explained in the section on prepositions and the section on object (see pages 71, 98).

The brick fell *on me*.

b. A preposition that is understood, i.e. not mentioned.

It gave (to) *me* concussion.

The following words are common pronouns for one person or thing:

I you he she it me her him

And for more than one person or thing:

we you they us them

Demonstrative pronouns

As the name suggests, demonstrative pronouns demonstrate or point out 'which one' of a number. There are just four obvious ones:

	Singular	**Plural**
(here)	this	these
(there)	that	those

Remember, as the pronoun *takes the place of a noun*, the noun is not mentioned.

A pronoun – *This* is scrumptious.
Not a pronoun – *This* éclair is scrumptious.

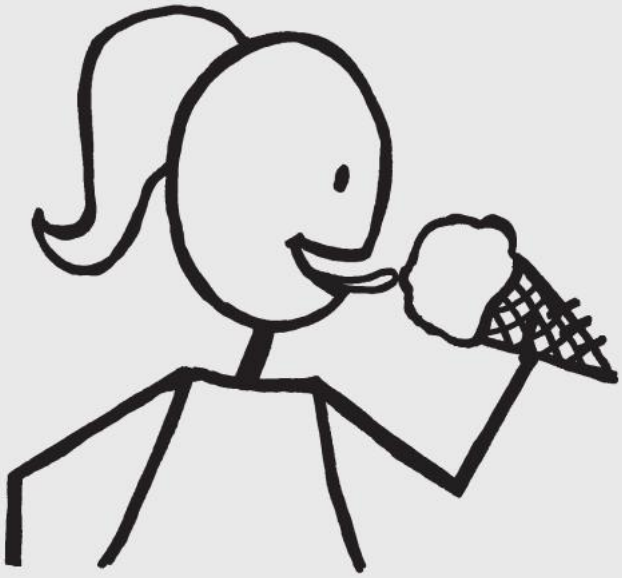
In the second sentence *this* is an adjective qualifying (telling more about) the noun 'éclair'. (See adjectives on page 53.)
Note: the words *one* and *such* can also be used as pronouns taking the place of nouns.
For example:

One can search for gemstones.
Such is life.
I found *one*.
He told me *such*.

2.1 Activities: pronouns

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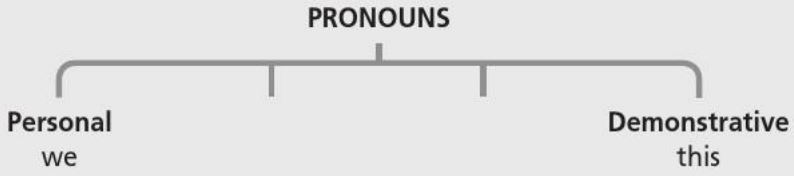
1. Students rewrite sentences replacing the nouns with suitable pronouns.
2. Students in pairs attempt to have a conversation without using any pronouns. Suggest subjects, such as:
   a. What you did yesterday ...
   b. A teacher reprimanding a student for a bad piece of work ...
3. Students are given cloze sentences with a choice of pronouns for filling the gaps.
   a. Who drove the car? David drove . . . . . (them, it, his, we)
   b. Who gave Lucy the chewing gum? . . . . . did. (him, those, he, this)
   c. We saw . . . . . at the show. (I, they, him, us)
   d. David bought . . . . . ice-creams. (he, they, us, this)
   e. Jenny was at the show. Did . . . . . see . . . . . (them, her, we, you)



4. Students make example sentences using pronouns correctly, orally, on the board or in their grammar exercise books.

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5. Choose pronouns to fill in the blanks.
   a. Michael gave . . . . . some of . . . . . .
   b. . . . . really enjoyed . . . . . .
   c. . . . . were ripe and juicy.
   d. So . . . . . gave . . . . . to Bella.
   e. . . . . enjoyed it too.
   f. . . . . said . . . . . was the best . . . . . had ever had.
   g. Shall . . . . . go and get more of . . . . . .?
   h. Yes . . . . . is a good idea.
   i. Let . . . . . go now.
   j. . . . . can take this basket to carry . . . . . .
6. Students draw a flowchart for pronouns showing personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. Further categories can be added as they are learnt.



C

Checklist: pronouns

Students should now be able to:

- give the meaning of the word 'pronoun'
- define the word pronoun – what is a pronoun? (with emphasis on the point that a pronoun *takes the place* of a noun, so the noun is not mentioned)
- explain why we have pronouns in our language
- pick out or mark the nouns in a given passage
- replace nouns with pronouns in a given passage

Verbs

3

We can't* do *without them!

Definition: The word 'verb' comes from the Latin *verbum* meaning 'word'. Verbs are doing, being or having words.

Before learning about verbs, students should:

- understand the term 'noun'
- recognise common and proper nouns
- understand the term 'pronoun'
- recognise most personal pronouns
- be able to explain their purpose

It is a good idea to teach verbs next, as a noun or pronoun together with a verb, can form a complete sentence. This proves most satisfactory for the student.

Care should be taken by the teacher to proceed to each new section or concept only when the previous one has been fully grasped. The order of the segments has been chosen carefully to provide a sound structure of understanding.

For example, the section on finite and non-finite verbs comes naturally at the end of the first section. However, teachers may judge the timing of teaching this, depending on students' level of understanding. It should not be left too long. A simple way of expressing it would be that a verb must have a doer (i.e. a subject) for it to make sense.

Finite and non-finite verbs

A verb needs a noun (or a pronoun) in front of it for it to make sense.

For example:

John *waves*.
The load *slipped*.

Verbs are of two kinds, non-finite or finite. Non-finite means not complete. Non-finite verbs are not complete, because they do not have a subject, that is, the person or thing that does the action, or that the sentence is about. For more about the subject see page 92.

Non-finite verbs also do not show a sense of time, i.e. tense. Finite verbs have both a subject and a tense.
For example:

I hope (present)
John hoped (past)

The most common and recognisable form of non-finite verb is the to-infinitive.
For example:

to drink, to be, to laugh ...

3.1 Activities: finite and non-finite verbs

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The recognition of *action* is one of the first verbal concepts that young children grasp, so we have them thinking about things that they do, such as breathe, eat, clap, play.

1. Students act the verbs. This can be done in teams with each person calling out a verb for their counterpart in the other team to act. The latter then calls out their verb for the next in the first team, until all have had a turn.
2. Provide on paper a list of nouns plus a separate list of verbs in random order, which students match. This, too, can be done orally or in writing. The lists could be written side by side and students draw lines matching the nouns to suitable verbs, for example:

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birds	pedal
trees	hoot
radios	neigh
lions	sing
dolphins	blare
water	roar
cyclists	erupt
volcanoes	grow
owls	flows

3. Students are provided with a list of nouns with which to compose sentences by adding an appropriate verb to each. This also could be done in reverse, for example:

	Noun	*Verb (students add)*
a.	the boy	joked
b.	snow	fell
c.	my uncle	laughed
d.	our cat	scratched
e.	the hose	broke
f.	a ghost	appeared
g.	the wind	howled
h.	my friend	fell sick
i.	the ship	sailed
j.	the horses	galloped

4. Students use the present tense to indicate a habitual action, for example:

   Uncle John snores.
   April brings showers.

a.	Dad	f.	jet planes
b.	my brother	g.	eagles
c.	old cars	h.	ducks
d.	tramps	i.	geese
e.	dictators	j.	soldiers

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5. Students add nouns to the following verbs that will indicate habit or custom, for example:

   Lions – Lions roar.

   a. . . . . beat drums
   b. . . . . sing
   c. . . . . leave trails
   d. . . . . guard the building
   e. . . . . make speeches
   f. . . . . irons shirts
   g. . . . . paint pictures
   h. . . . . take money
   i. . . . . rattles

Tense

Definition: The word 'tense' is from Latin *tempus* meaning time.

Before learning about tense, students should be able to:

- recognise nouns
- recognise pronouns and understand their purpose
- know the meaning of the word verb
- recognise verbs and name verbs

Tense is indicated whenever we use a finite verb. A useful way to explain tense to students is by standing facing the students and making symbolic gestures. As the direction of reading in English is from left to right, we use a corresponding sequence. To the students' left we indicate something occurring in the past. Directly in front indicates something occurring now, in the present, and to the right something which is to happen in the future.

Past	Present	Future
I laughed	I laugh	I shall (or will) laugh

3.2 Activities: tense

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1. Students draw the tense chart in their grammar exercise books. Provide more verbs for which students enter the correct forms on their chart, for example:

   wreck, chip, say, hurry

   It will help the students if they think in terms of the verb having a subject, for example:

	Past	Present	Future
(word) sag (subject) the bed	sagged	sags	will sag
(word) write (subject) they	wrote	writes	will write

   Remember that many of these activities can be done orally, but students should do some examples in their grammar exercise books.

2. Students are given a list of subjects to which they add their own choice of verb, for example:

the old car	the gate	my friend	thunder
the cow	a bull	the milk cart	lightning
the monster	slime		

   Students may want to add more to their sentence.

Simple and continuous verbs

These indicate whether the action of the verb is completed or still going on. A simple verb is one in which the action is complete within the respective tense.
For example:

I cooked, I cook, I shall cook

Compare this with the continuous form in which the action of the verb is still going on.
Thus:

I was cooking, I am cooking, I shall be cooking

The 'ing' ending conveys continuity, but the sense is not complete without the addition of a 'helper' or ***auxiliary*** verb (see pages 49–52).

3.3 Activities: simple and continuous verbs

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1. Provide a scenario, such as: 'My brother is looking for a job …'
   Each student in turn takes the part of the brother. The others ask him what he can do. He acts out one thing that he can do for the others to guess, for example:

   a. Load a truck
   b. Fill ice-cream cones

2. Students change tenses by filling in the spaces:

	Past	Present	Future
a.	I shivered	I	I . . . . .
b.	. . . . .	Jack leaves	. . . . .
c.	. . . . .	. . . . .	will break
d.	I did not	. . . . .	. . . . .
e.	. . . . .	. . . . .	who will work?

3. Students now fill in the tense tables.

   A sample table of tenses

Singular	Past	Present	Future
1st person	I gave	I give	I shall/will give
2nd person	You gave	You give	You will give
3rd person	He/she gave	He/she gives	He/she will give

Plural			
1st person	We gave	We give	We shall/will give
2nd person	You gave	You give	You will give
3rd person	They gave	They give	They will give

a. Students complete the table with the verb 'to sing'.

Singular	**Past**	**Present**	**Future**
1st person			I shall
2nd person			
3rd person	He		
Plural			
1st person			
2nd person		You	
3rd person			

A sample table of tenses for an irregular verb

Singular	**Past**	**Present**	**Future**
1st person	I was	I am	I shall/will be
2nd person	You were	You are	You will be
3rd person	He/she was	He/she is	He/she will be
Plural			
1st person	We were	We are	We shall/will be
2nd person	You were	You are	You will be
3rd person	They were	They are	They will be

A

b. Students complete the table with the verb 'to go'.

Singular	**Past**	**Present**	**Future**
1st person			
2nd person			
3rd person		He	
Plural			
1st person			We shall
2nd person			
3rd person	They		

A sample table of continuous tenses using the present participle

Singular	**Past**	**Present**	**Future**
1st person	I was speaking	I am speaking	I shall/will be speaking
2nd person	We were speaking	You are speaking	You will be speaking
3rd person	He/she/it was speaking	He/she/it is speaking	He/she/it will be speaking
Plural			
1st person	We were speaking	We are speaking	We shall/will be speaking
2nd person	You were speaking	You are speaking	You will be speaking
3rd person	They were speaking	They are speaking	They will be speaking

A

c. Students complete the table with the verb 'to achieve'.

Singular	Past	Present	Future
1st person	I was		
2nd person		You are	
3rd person			
Plural			
1st person			
2nd person			
3rd person			They will be

Auxiliary (helper) verbs

Definition: The word 'auxiliary' is formed from the Latin *auxilium* meaning 'help', and in grammar it refers to certain verbs that are used to form tenses.

The main 'helpers' are taken from forms of the verbs 'to be' and 'to have'. Most native English speakers have little difficulty with using these forms according to the language that they hear round about them. They do need explanation, however, and ESL students will need more practice.

Singular	Plural
I am	We are
You are	You are
He is	They are

We need to remember that these forms can be made more tricky to recognise by the contractions which are common in everyday speech, but not always fully understood. (See contractions on page 80.)
For example:

I'll do it – meaning I shall do it.
He won't do it – meaning he will not do it.

Similarly, we need to explain that the auxiliary verb can be separated from the main verb.
For example:

We *are* definitely *going* – *are going* is the verb.

Also, when we ask a question we turn the verb around and place the pronoun in between.
For example:

Statement: He *was telling* that funny joke.
Question: *Was* he *telling* that funny joke?

Other auxiliary verbs indicate uncertainty and help take on the role of the subjunctive (see page 146). These need just to be recognised as verb parts at the earlier stage and will be recognised through practice. They are *can*, *could*, *has*, *have*, *may*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would* and *must*.
For example:

You *must* wipe your shoes when you come in.
Rover *would* not swallow his pill.

3.4 Activities: auxiliaries

A

1. Students take turns to act or mime an activity. The others guess what they *are doing*. They give their guesses in the continuous tense, for example:

The student acts/mimes drying dishes. The others raise their hands for one to answer.

He/she is drying dishes.

2. Students are provided with pictures showing various people doing things, such as working inside a shop, in the market place, in the park etc. and they say in turn what each is doing, using the continuous tense.
   This activity can also be done in writing and is very useful for ESL students of any age.
3. Students pick out/mark verbs in a given passage, or in sentences. They must include the auxiliary parts of the verbs.

   I would like to have a party for my birthday but Dad has arranged a meeting on that day and my brother will be at soccer practice. I could perhaps make it next week, but that is too soon and I would have no time to send the invitations. I must decide quickly so I can start planning. I do hope you can come.

4. Students are provided with a list of verbs in simple tense and they add the corresponding continuous tense. Again this can be done orally, on the board or in writing, for example:

   hop, hopping

   If done as a writing exercise, check the spellings, particularly the doubling of consonants after the short vowel.
   a. stay
   b. grip
   c. enjoy
   d. enter
   e. forgive
   f. wait
   g. behead
   h. die

A

i. agree
j. measure

5. Students now fill in the charts on pages 47–49. Other verbs can be substituted for those given in the previous exercise, especially practising any that give trouble, either with spelling or tense form.

C

Checklist: verbs

Students should now be able to:

- define the term verb clearly and accurately
- explain the term tense and classify past, present and future
- give the past, present and future form of a common noun
- explain the terms finite and infinite/non-finite with examples
- supply a subject for a given verb form
- correctly select a verb in a given sentence, recognising a verb in two parts, i.e. he *will laugh*
- give examples of the present tense used to indicate habitual action
- complete a tense table using a common verb
- explain the difference between a simple and continuous tense
- change a verb from simple to continuous tense and vice versa
- correctly name the tense of given verbs

Adjectives

4

Colour your world!

Definition: The word 'adjective' is from Latin *ad jacere* meaning 'throw to' or 'add'. In the grammatical sense, this means to add the characteristics of something, i.e. to qualify it.

Before studying adjectives, students should:

- know the definition of a noun
- recognise nouns, both common and proper
- be able to give examples of nouns

Adjectives tell us more about nouns.

For example:

a *red* rose a *distinguished* scholar

Remember: *this*, *that*, *these* and *those*, which are pronouns standing on their own, are adjectives if the noun is specified. We call these possessive adjectives.

For example:

This is tasty. [pronoun]

But – *This* cake is tasty. [adjective]

Explained clearly, this is a lesson in logic.

The terms 'limit' and 'modify' are sometimes used with adjectives, but these are also applied to adverbs, and it is helpful for the student to use different terms, to better distinguish one from another. For young children, the word 'describe' for adjectives is preferable as they will be familiar with the word and readily understand its meaning and application.

Ezra Pound preferred poetry without adjectives. He states: 'The true poet is easily distinguished from the false when he trusts himself to the simplest expression and writes without adjectives.' And Mark Twain wrote: 'As to the adjective, when in doubt, strike it out.'[1]

On the other hand, Humpty Dumpty in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, proclaims that: 'You can do anything with adjectives.' But the best advice comes from William Safire: 'Adjective salad is delicious, with each element contributing its individual and unique flavour; but a puree of adjective soup tastes yecchy.'[2]

Well-chosen adjectives are succinct and titillate the imagination, while a surfeit must inevitably diminish. Words, such as 'nice' change in meaning over time and many words such as 'terrible', 'fantastic' and 'fabulous' have lost their preciseness, such that it is difficult to find sufficiently expressive replacements. It behoves all teachers and tutors to encourage students in the rigorous exercise of accuracy and the development of an extensive vocabulary to draw from.

Young children need a free hand to practise and experiment with all the words at their disposal. The middle years will be especially important for training them in selectivity and adapting language to the purpose of the writing. Adjectives provide excellent opportunities for discussion.

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1 Crystal, David & Crystal, Hilary 2000, *Words on words: Quotations about language and languages*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK.

2 ibid.



4.1 Activities: adjectives

1. The outdoor activities suggested for nouns can now be done for practising adjectives, with the students adding qualifiers to the nouns they cite, for example:

   A *broken* fence
   A *new* concrete tank

2. Students can be provided with interesting puzzle exercises:
   a. a list of interesting nouns and a list of colourful adjectives that can be matched, for example:

      Nouns: toad, shoes, journey, truck, bride, worm, doughnut, tooth, uncle, track
      Adjectives: grumpy, broken-down, dusty, tasty, loose, pretty, incredible, wriggly, slimy, worn-out

   b. a list of interesting nouns for students to qualify with suitable adjectives of their choice
3. Each student writes a noun on a piece of paper. The papers are then passed in the same direction to the adjacent student. Students each add an adjective to the noun they have received.
4. Students mark or list adjectives from a selected passage of prose or poetry.
5. Provide sentences or a short passage without adjectives. Students make it descriptive by adding appropriate adjectives of their own choice.
6. Students are provided with pairs of initial letters with which they make adjective–noun combinations, for example:

   f . . . . . p . . . . . – fat pig, fenced paddock

   Extra points could be allocated for inventiveness, suitability and correct spelling.

   a. l . . . . . t . . . . .
   b. y . . . . . f . . . . .
   c. s . . . . . b . . . . .
   d. g . . . . . p . . . . .
   e. w . . . . . d . . . . .
   f. a . . . . . l . . . . .
   g. l . . . . . w . . . . .
   h. w . . . . . h . . . . .
   i. f . . . . . m . . . . .
   j. d . . . . . a . . . . .

Adjectives formed from nouns and verbs

Adjectives can be formed from nouns to express the quality of the noun.
For example:

point [noun], pointed [adjective]
hope [noun], hopeful [adjective]

Adjectives can also be formed from verbs.
For example:

to run [verb], running [adjective]
to believe [verb], believable [adjective]

Older students can be given exercises in forming one part of speech from another.

Words that can be used as several parts of speech

We are reminded that words take their part of speech from the function they have in the sentence. For example, the word *bank* can be:

a noun: I went to the *bank*.
a verb: He will *bank* the money he earned.
an adjective: These are foreign *bank* notes.

4.2 Activities: adjectives and nouns

A

1. Students can be given a variety of words to use in sentences in different ways, as above. They mark the part of speech of each one, for example:

   mail, dust, wash, bath, motor, bore, saw, glue, post, side, water, pump, pipe, dress

2. Students find their own words that can function as several parts of speech, such as water, whip, string. This is a really useful exercise for reinforcing understanding of the functions of words.
3. Form adjectives from nouns, for example:

   noise [noun], noisy [adjective]

   Students may need a dictionary.

   a. wood
   b. child
   c. hope
   d. picture
   e. beauty
   f. disaster
   g. fame
   h. memory
   i. dive
   j. crime
4. Form adjectives from verbs, for example:

   run [verb], runny [adjective]

   Some of these are also past participles which will be taught in a later section.

   a. copy
   b. rot
   c. wear
   d. drive
   e. speak
   f. dread
   g. sweep
   h. dictate
   i. write
   j. grieve

Adjectives of degree and comparison

These are alternative terms applied to the act of comparing the extent or amount of the quality expressed by the adjective. We show this comparison by adding endings (suffixes) to the adjectives.

If two things are compared (comparative form), we use the suffix *er*.

For example:

Dad's voice is louder than Mum's.

Your baby is heavier than mine.

Note how the *y* of heavy has been changed to *i* with the addition of an ending.

If more than two things are compared (superlative form), *est* is the correct ending.

For example:

Colin's voice is loudest of all.

My BMX is the fastest on the track.
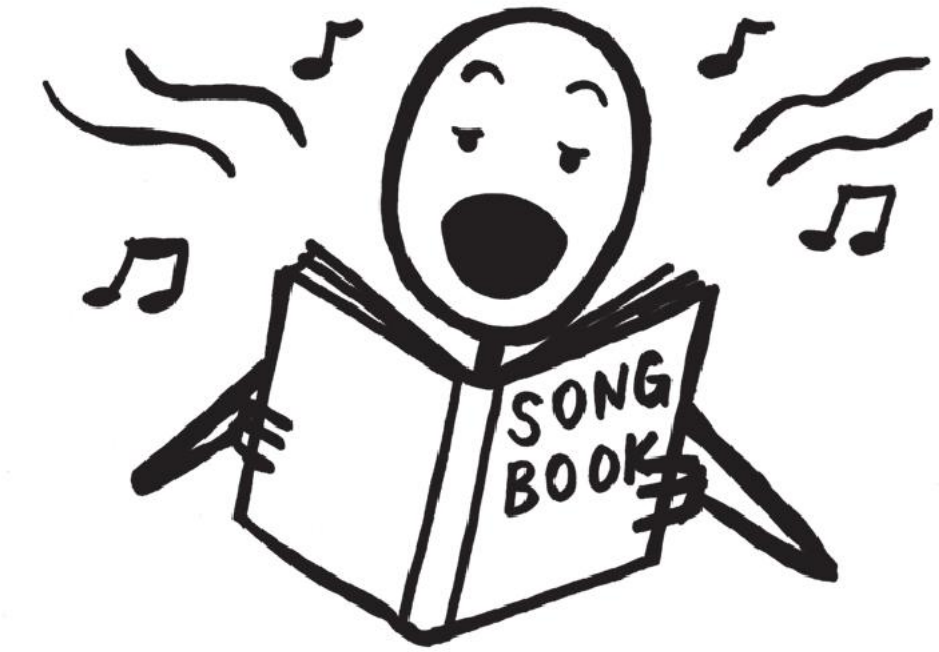
Some adjectives would become very clumsy with the endings added, so we have the alternative of preceding the adjective with *more* or *most*. This usually applies to longer words such as 'sensible' or 'beautiful'. Sometimes it is just a matter of ease on the ear.

For example:

Comfortable: This chair is comfortable; that chair is more comfortable but Grandad's chair is most comfortable.

Some of the words that we find hard to categorise are, on further examination, clearly adjectives, as they tell more about nouns. Students do need to realise this so that they can fit them into the scheme of things. They should be explained, although the terms need not be memorised at this stage.

Note: For correct use of *few* and *less* see pages 129, 193.



Colin's voice is the loudest of all.

4.3 Activities: degree and comparison

A

1. Students should write the chart of comparisons in their grammar exercise books and add more words of their choice.
2. Students can practise comparative and superlative forms orally. Suggest a word for which students add the comparative and superlative forms. They can put them into sentences.
3. A large chart may be made by the students to hang on the wall. If the chart is laminated, students can add new words using whiteboard pens.
4. Students select words from boxes to match with suitable nouns (see following page).

swift	scary	winding	gifted	glamorous
gripping	rickety	cunning	rusty	brave

A

Answers are written to increase vocabulary and spelling ability.

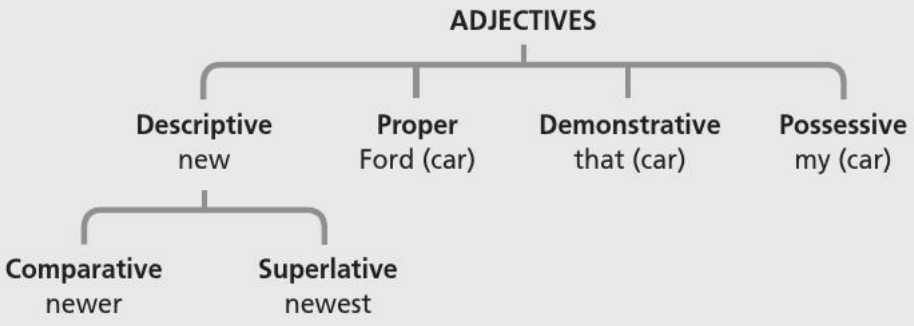
a. . . . . path
b. . . . . footbridge
c. . . . . soldier
d. . . . . arrow
e. . . . . tank
f. . . . . monster
g. . . . . model
h. . . . . fox
i. . . . . tale
j. . . . . artist

5. Students find more meaningful words than 'nice' or 'good' for the following.

a. . . . . party
b. . . . . boy
c. . . . . person
d. . . . . race
e. . . . . house
f. . . . . pear
g. . . . . dog
h. . . . . tune
i. . . . . garden

They then find an adjective for each of these which means the opposite (i.e. not good).

6. Students complete an adjectives flowchart.



Checklist: adjectives

C

The student should now be able to:

- give the meaning of the word adjective
- define the word adjective – what is an adjective?
- give examples of adjectives
- qualify given nouns with appropriate adjectives
- pick out adjectives from written material
- apply adjectives to nouns to make a sentence more meaningful
- explain the function of adjectives

5 Adverbs

The way it's done!

Definition: Remembering that the word 'verb' is derived from Latin *verbum* meaning 'word' we see that adverb must mean something added to a word.

Before learning about adverbs, students should:

- understand the term 'verb'
- be able to describe the function of a verb – What is a verb?
- be able to form simple sentences using a noun or pronoun together with a verb

An adverb is a word that adds meaning to any other word, except a noun or pronoun (that being the job of an adjective).

Adverbs are best understood as being of two kinds, those that add to the meaning of a verb and those that add to the meaning of other parts of speech and other adverbs.

The English language includes an immense range of adverbs, and while flowery writing can result from an over-lavish use of either adjectives and adverbs, they do enable us to be wonderfully imaginative and subtly descriptive. Henry James remarked in one of his letters, 'I'm glad you like adverbs – I adore them; they are the only qualifications I really much respect.'[3]

Adverbs are best taught first, as their function is readily understood by young children. In order to establish a clear distinction between the functions of adverbs and adjectives it is preferable to use a term other than 'qualify' for adverbs. The term 'limit'

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3 Crystal, David & Crystal, Hilary 2000, *Words on words: Quotations about language and languages*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK.

can confuse young students by implying diminished meaning, although that, of course, it does in fact do. For instance, if you attribute one quality to a verb such as 'He ran *quickly*', you have denied it an opposing or conflicting quality – he did *not* run slowly. However, to avoid any confusion for learners we have chosen the term 'modify' for the function of adverbs.

While acknowledging that students may come up against kinds of adverbs not mentioned here, the following are those commonly used and easy to comprehend. Adverbs add meaning in a number of different ways.

Adverbs of time ('when' adverbs)

These adverbs tell us *when* the action of the verb does or does not occur.
For example:

tomorrow, never
The show is on *tomorrow*. I have *never* been to the show.

Adverbs of place ('where' adverbs)

These tell us *where* the action of the verb does or does not happen.
For example:

here, somewhere
It isn't *here*. It must be *somewhere!*

Adverbs of manner ('how' adverbs)

These tell us *the way in which* the action of the verb does or does not happen.
For example:

well, rudely
You speak *well*. That boy spoke *rudely*.

Interrogative adverbs ('question' adverbs)

These adverbs are the question words that apply to the verb in a sentence.
For example:

how, why, where
How did he escape?
Why did you leave the gate open?
Where can he be?

Comparative adverbs ('comparing' adverbs)

Adverbs of comparison follow a similar pattern to comparative adjectives while maintaining their function of modifying words.
For example:

fast, faster [comparing two], fastest [comparing more than two]
The cake disappeared *fast*.
Your buns went *faster.*
But the pizza went *fastest!*

In the case of longer adverbs we use *more* and *most* – again to avoid clumsiness.

What a colourful tie. This one's *more* colourful.
But that one is *most* colourful.

Irregular adverbs of comparison

These irregular forms cause difficulty for some students who use them wrongly and use an adjective instead (He did it *good* – or performed *real bad*).

It is a good idea to teach these and establish them in the minds of students early. Use a display, which can be made by the students themselves.

Adverbs	Comparative	Superlative
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst
much	more	most
little	less	least

As some of these words can also be adjectives, you may remind students to think about their function in a sentence.
For example:

This is the *worst* firewood we have had. [adjective qualifying the noun 'firewood']
It burns *worst* in wet weather. [adverb modifying the verb 'burns']

For adverbs modifying other parts of speech, see page 130.

5.1 Activities: kinds of adverbs

A

1. Some favourite activities involve acting. Suggest an action, such as lifting a heavy weight or chopping down a tree. Then name an adverb of manner. The students do the action in the manner given.
2. 'In the manner of the word' is another favourite. One student decides on an act they will perform, such as frying an egg, flying an aeroplane, or being a police-officer recording details at the scene of a crime. (Speaking is permitted for this game.)
   The other students in turn name an adjective of manner such as 'happily'. The first student performs their act in the manner of that word. The others try to guess what the student is doing.
   It is difficult to forget what adverbs are after performing some of these activities.

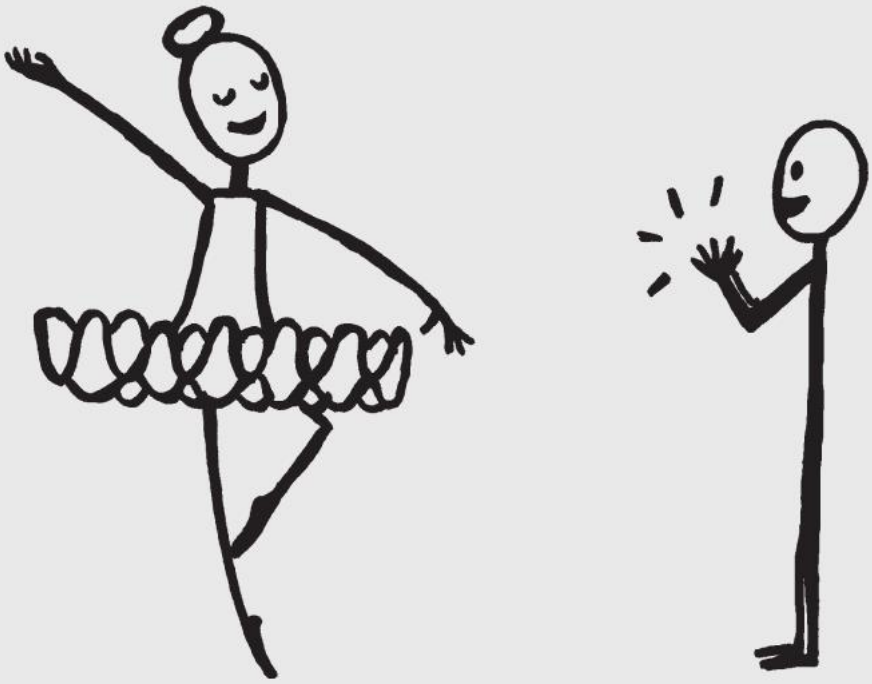
A

3. Students have a list of verbs to which they add (or match) suitable adverbs, for example:

   dance (beautifully, clumsily)
   eat (greedily, daintily)
   get married (tomorrow, here)

   Encourage students to be adventurous in their choice.

   a. singing
   b. swim
   c. cook
   d. read
   e. drove
   f. swallow
   g. laughed
   h. shouted
   i. will go
   j. fell sick



My sister dances beautifully.

4. Students are provided with a short passage to which they add appropriate adverbs. Passages can be chosen at the students' level, for example young students might have a selection from *Thomas the Tank Engine* or *Harry Potter* while older ones might have theirs from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or *Wuthering Heights*.

A

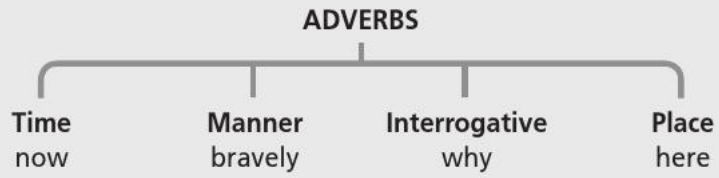
5. Students are given a chart, or better still they draw one in their grammar exercise books. Sentences, each containing an adverb, are written down the left-hand side. Three columns to the right are headed Time, Place and Manner. Students mark the adverb in each sentence, then enter it into the correct column, for example:

	Time	Place	Manner
He looked everywhere for you.		everywhere	
I stupidly rang the wrong number.			stupidly

6. Students are given several adverbs to use in their own sentences, for example:

   always, where, softly

7. Students draw their own chart for adverbs and fill in their own examples.



Checklist: adverbs

C

Students should now be able to:

- give an accurate definition of the term 'adverb'
- select adverbs from a given list of words or a passage
- state the category of each adverb given
- give examples of each category of adverb
- supply comparative forms of a regular adverb
- make a chart of comparison for the common irregular adverbs given
- add suitable adverbs to given verbs
- explain clearly the difference between an adjective and an adverb

6 Articles

Any old one?

Definition: The word 'article' comes from the Latin *articulus* meaning 'a little joint', or a bit joined on. Articles are sometimes referred to as determinants.

In English we have only three articles, *a*, *an*, *the* – so they should really present no problem and for most, even very young children, they come naturally in speech. But even native English speakers sometimes confuse them when reading. This is partly as a result of 'whole word' reading practices and lack of correction, by which students acquire habits of inaccuracy and guessing.

It is also due to the fact that words such as 'a', 'an' and 'the' have no substance; they do not have a concrete meaning and therefore make no appeal to the senses. I call them 'nothing words' as they present no image to the imagination.

But they are important and they do have a function. A good way to illustrate the meaning of 'nothing words' is by gesture.
For example:
Say to the students:

'Look at *the* clock'.

Point at the clock as you say it, to show that you are speaking of a *specific* clock. Then ask:

'Can anyone lend me *a* pencil?'

and as you say it throw both arms out, palms upwards in an enquiring gesture, indicating that *any* pen will do; you do not have a specific one in mind.

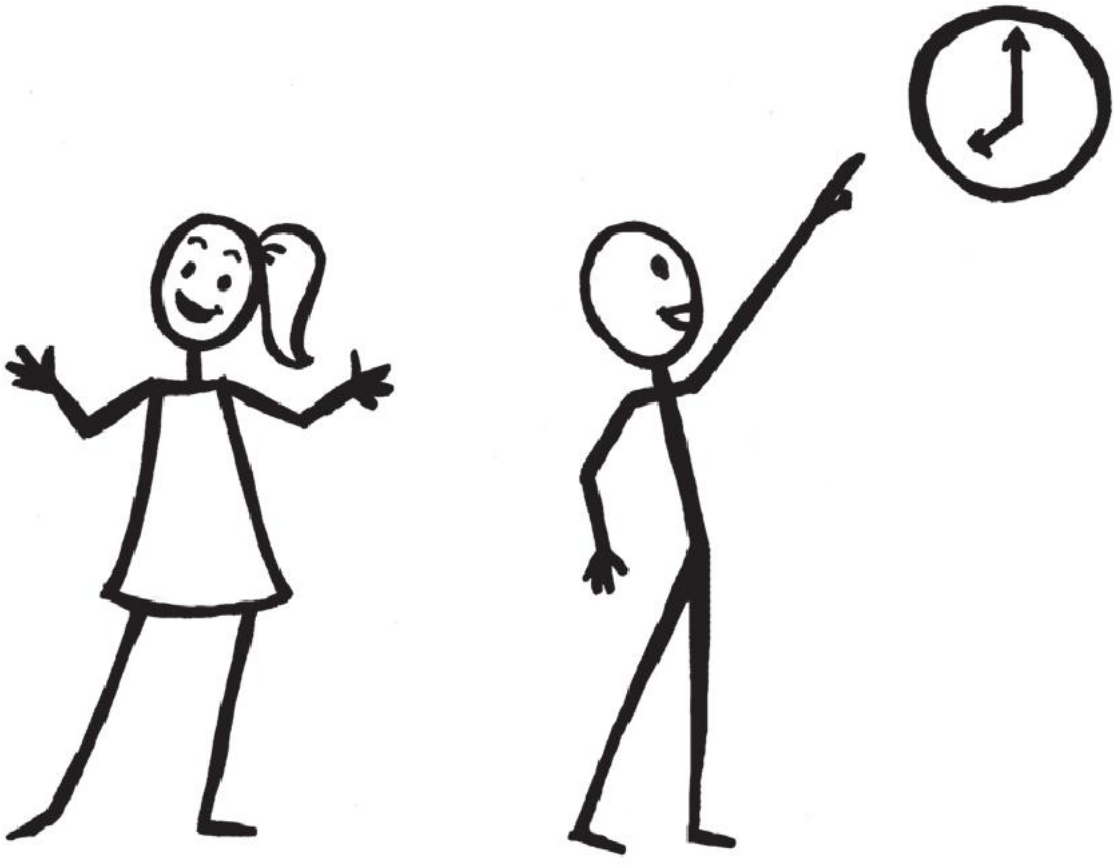
The indefinite article

This refers to the words 'a', or 'an' when followed by a word beginning with a vowel such as *apple*: *an* apple, *an* orchestra. It is called indefinite as it refers to any one of the thing, not a particular one.

The definite article

This one, on the other hand, refers to a *specific* thing and therefore indicates a more accurate reference.
For example:

> Don't forget to ask *the* driver to tell you when you should get off *the* bus.



A...

The...

A 6.1 Activities: articles

1. Students in turn practise making sentences and gesturing for the articles as described above.
2. Read a passage – or students read – aloud and make the appropriate gesture for each article as it is read.
3. Students read aloud and a mark is noted for each misread 'nothing word' – the lowest score is the best result.
4. Students draw their own cartoon illustrating the two gestures.

C Checklist: articles

Students should now be able to:

- explain and demonstrate the difference in use between *a/an* and *the*
- correctly use and write *a* or *an* before a given noun

Prepositions

7

What's the position?

Definition: The word 'preposition' is from the Latin word *praepositio* meaning 'placed before' or 'in front of'.

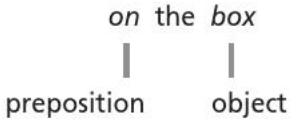
Just as the word denotes, a preposition normally precedes a noun or pronoun. It shows a relationship to something, mainly according to place (*on* the table) or time (*at* 2.00 pm) and less obviously to a notion, i.e. something abstract (*beyond* belief).

Prepositions, by virtue of coming before a noun or pronoun are said to 'take an object'. (Compare with direct objects on page 97.)

Note that these same prepositions often appear in verb combinations such as 'wash up', 'have to'. In these examples the combination of verb and preposition presents a new and specific notion – everyone knows that by adding the word 'up' to 'wash' we have the particular meaning of washing dishes. Therefore it is commonsense to deal with the whole as one verb.

In another form, words that look like prepositions and come after the verb are modifying the meaning of the verb, as in 'look around', 'stand up'. These are adverbs and are easy to recognise as they do *not* 'take an object' – i.e. there is no noun or pronoun following.

For prepositions taking objects see page 98.



It would not normally be appropriate to make this distinction with young children. It will arise naturally as they mature in understanding.

So we deal first with prepositions indicating place – which *do* have an object – as these are the easiest to comprehend and may be illustrated through simple activities, followed by prepositions indicating time, for example: *by* Monday.

A

7.1 Activities: prepositions

1. Suggest students pick up an object such as a rubber or pencil. Ask them to place it *on* something (the desk or a book). Then *under* it, *beside* it and so on. Write the words on the board as you do this.
2. This activity can be done in the play area. Call out prepositions and have the students take up appropriate positions to illustrate them.
3. Draw two boxes on the board. Students are asked to imagine a ball being thrown *at* them, *on* them, *between* them etc. They suggest any others they can think of. Students then draw the boxes in their own books. As they write each preposition down the side or below, they can draw each in an appropriate position on the diagram.
4. Students are each supplied with a picture from which they make observations using prepositions. They write these in their grammar exercise books, for example:

   A lady standing *at* the door.
   A black cat *on* the sofa.

C

Checklist: prepositions

Students should now be able to:

- define the term 'preposition'
- recognise a preposition taking on the function of an adverb

Conjunctions

8

Come and join us!

Definition: This word is from the Latin *con* meaning 'together' and *jungere* meaning 'to join'. A conjunction joins two or more parts of speech of a similar kind or two or more parts of a sentence.

Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *but* and *or* are used to join two or more different things.
For example:

Bread *and* butter, tea *or* coffee.

I went to the bowling alley *but* (*and*) my brother stayed at home.

Subordinating conjunctions

As the name suggests these join a subordinate clause to a main or principal clause, so they should be taught in more detail later, along with the section on clauses (see page 167). However, it is wise for students to be able to classify them at this stage. Students can recognise them as joining two parts of a sentence.
For example:

Tom had stomach ache, *because* he ate too many plums.

Although he felt sick, he still played soccer.

A 8.1 Activities: conjunctions

For coordinating conjunctions little practice is needed, but students do need examples for reinforcing the functions and for reference.

1. Suggest a sentence that could end with a phrase such as those suggested above, and students add a given number of parts, for example:
   a. Which do you prefer? (tea *or* coffee; jam *or* marmalade.)
   b. What did you have for tea? (bread *and* jam; jelly *and* ice-cream.)
   c. What happened? (Tom went, *but* I stayed at home.)
2. Remind students of the function of subordinating conjunctions which link a subordinate adverbial clause to a principal clause. Suggest a principal clause to which students can add subordinating adverbial clauses of different kinds, for example:

   Marion did not arrive –
   because she missed the bus.
   until half way through the show.
   so Steve went on his own.

C Checklist: conjunctions

Beginner level students should now be able to:

- name the three common coordinating conjunctions (*and*, *or* and *but*)

Advanced level students should now be able to:

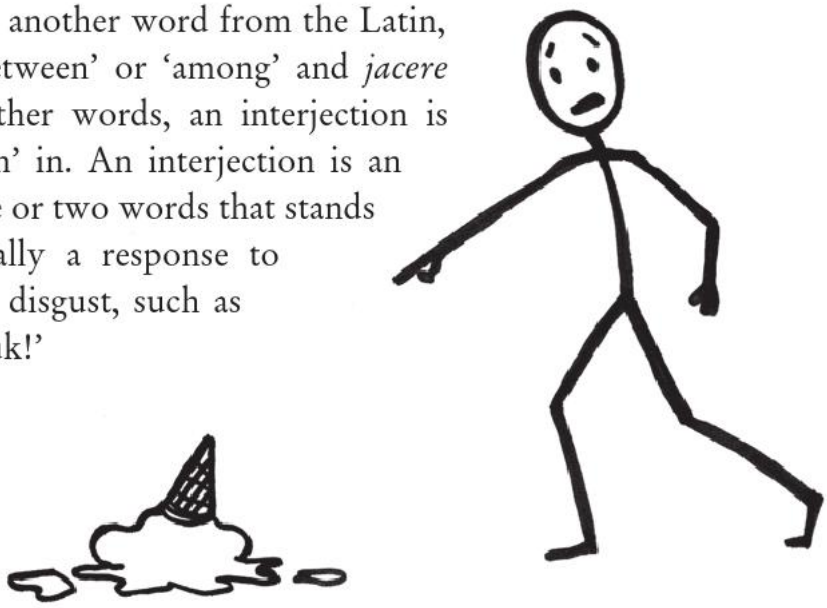
- explain the use of subordinating conjunctions and give examples
- replace the word 'and' in sentences that would be better expressed with the use of a subordinating conjunction linking adverbial clauses (see page 167)

Interjections

9

Wow!

Definition: This is another word from the Latin, *inter*, meaning 'between' or 'among' and *jacere* –'to throw'. In other words, an interjection is something 'thrown' in. An interjection is an exclamation of one or two words that stands alone and is usually a response to surprise, shock or disgust, such as 'Goodness!' or 'Yuk!'



Oh! No! Yuk!

9.1 Activity: interjections

A

Students need no activity to practise interjections, but they will enjoy suggesting some. (You may need some ground rules for these!) One could ask them for suggestions of what they would say given certain situations, for example:

a. they dropped their ice-cream in the gutter …
b. they saw a ghost …
c. they tripped over a thong …
d. they bumped into a friend they have not seen for years …
e. they heard their favourite show is cancelled …

10 Sentence forms

Before students begin this section they should be able to read *and* write simple sentences and take dictated ones with a high level of accuracy.

In this section students are introduced to sentence construction. Firstly, they learn to recognise and correctly use the four basic kinds of sentences together with the appropriate punctuation. Students are reminded that all sentences start with a capital letter.

Statements

These are sentences in which something is stated or told. Speech and writing consists mainly of statements. They end with a full stop.

For example:

Roger fell into the river.

Questions

These are the second most common form of sentence. They ask something – which they expect to be answered – and they end with a question mark.

For example:

Who pulled him out?

Commands

These are orders given to other people or to animals – parents and teachers often give them – and they end with a full stop.
For example:

Don't play by the river.

Exclamations

These are often not a complete sentence at all, but one or two words expressing shock or horror. They end with an exclamation mark.
For example:

A shark! Look out! Oh no!

10.1 Activities: sentence forms

A

1. What kinds of sentences are these? Students write them in their books, adding the correct punctuation.
   a. Look where you are going (command)
   b. What did you do that for (question)
   c. It can't be true (statement)
   d. Never say die (command)
   e. What's the time (question)
   f. How would I know (question)
   g. It's bleeding (statement)
   h. I hope they win (statement)
   i. Help (exclamation)
   j. Tell me more (command)
2. Students change the wording of these sentences to make them questions, for example:

   You told a lie. – Did you tell a lie?

A

a. Cliff went to hospital.
b. I shall go to see him.
c. Take him some magazines.
d. He would like some Smarties.
e. The doctor thinks he has a broken leg.

3. A useful resource that can be used again and again is a pack of cards, a little smaller than playing cards, each with the name of a part of speech written clearly on the face. All cards must be the same colour, but different colours can be used for the written parts of speech. The following proportions are suggested but may be adjusted to suit:

Noun –	10
Adjective –	10
Pronoun –	6
Adverb –	8
Article –	6
Preposition –	8
Verb –	10
Conjunction –	4
Total –	62 cards

Game 1

The cards are well shuffled and placed face down in the centre of the group. Each student in turn takes one card from the top and then gives an example word corresponding to the part of speech named on the card. In the case that there is more than one possibility, as in the word 'book', the student must qualify it. If correct, the student keeps the card, as with a trick, but if incorrect the card is placed back under the pile. Then when the cards have all been used, count the score.

Game 2

Students have pencil and paper or exercise book beside them. Each in turn takes one card; then each in turn a second, then a third.

Using their three cards they make up and write a sentence which must contain all the parts of speech (in any order) that they hold in their hand, for example, for cards including the following: Adverb, Noun, Preposition:

A

Dad sings loudly in the shower

noun adverb preposition

The sentences can then be read out while the student displays the cards.

Game 3

Sentence patterns can then be supplied from which students compose sentences, using them randomly or in the given order, for example:

Noun ……	Verb ……	Adverb ……
The bus	is running	late

a. pronoun, conjunction, verb
b. adjective, noun, conjunction
c. pronoun, verb, noun, adjective
d. noun, conjunction, noun, verb
e. verb, preposition, adjective, noun

Checklist: sentence forms

C

Students should now be able to:

- name the four kinds of sentences
- give an example for each one
- use the correct punctuation for each
- name the kind of sentence from any one presented or picked randomly
- be able to reword a sentence to change its kind

11 The apostrophe

Definition: The word 'apostrophe' is from a Greek word meaning 'a turning away'. It refers to the omission of something, in this case one or more letters of a word, and it affects written language in several ways.

Before learning about apostrophes, students should know:

- the function of nouns and their various plural forms
- the function of pronouns.

The apostrophe gives rise to much confusion and error. But, as with so many particulars of grammar, the confusion is not caused by any real complexity but rather from a lack of understanding.

Recently, a very good computer teacher told me that, as her students made so many errors in the use of the apostrophe, she had told them not to use them at all. Yet, if they are explained at the right time and in a simple way, apostrophes need offer no threat at all.

Contractions

This one causes the least difficulty and usually results in the formation of one word from two, involving the verb 'to be', auxiliary (helper) verbs and negatives.
For example:

I'll	*from*	I shall/will
she'd	*from*	she would
can't	*from*	can not

We learn these forms from their use in spoken English, but need also to be able to write them in full.

Possession

This use causes the greatest confusion, but the rules that apply are, in spite of popular belief, quite straightforward.

Possession expresses the idea that something belongs to someone or some other thing, and omission represented by the apostrophe is actually the contraction of the word 'has'.
For example:

John has money.

becomes

John's money.

and

The dog has a dish.

becomes

The dog's (a) dish ...

This is a very economical language device. If the noun is in the plural form, already ending in 's', then the use of a second 's' would be clumsy. So the apostrophe sits on its own and the second 's' is simply omitted.
For example:

The dogs' dishes ...
The boys' careers ...

This awkwardness does not apply with plural forms that don't end with 's'.
For example:

Children's teeth ...

In spoken language, to avoid ambiguity, we can fall back on the longer form.
For example:
'The horse's trainer' sounds the same as 'the horses' trainer', so it is clearer to say 'the trainer of the horses' or similar.

If a surname ends in 's', as in Jones or Fields, the form 's pronounced es' (or 'is') is often used in speech but in writing it is proper to use the apostrophe alone, as with plurals.
For example:

The Jones' Mercedes

Avoiding confusion

The apostrophe is traditionally used for clarity in abbreviations and other forms.
For example:

The MSc's were awarded next.
There are two s's in 'grass'.

11.1 Activities: apostrophes

A

1. a. Students are given contractions and they supply the full form, first orally, then in writing:

   he'll, we're, can't, won't, would've, didn't, I'd, I'll, they'd, don't

   b. Students do the reverse giving the contracted form orally and in writing.
2. Students play an oral concentration game. The teacher gives a phrase and students raise both arms if the ending is 'apostrophe s', as in the girl's mother, or one arm for an apostrophe only, as in Captain Sykes' horse, or the boys' desks. Students must listen carefully for the plurals.

A

a. the headmaster's office
b. a bee's sting
c. two cars' headlights
d. the class's results
e. those dogs' bones
f. the science teacher's study
g. our museum's corridors
h. the king's horses
i. the horses' harnesses
j. my mother's hat

3. Students write on the board, or in their books, abbreviations and other usages of the apostrophe.
   MBA's, PhD's, BBQ's, do's and don't's, dot your i's (this would say 'is' without the apostrophe)

Checklist: apostrophes

C

Students should now be able to use the apostrophe for:

- showing possession of something belonging to:
  - one person or thing, e.g. grandma's glasses
  - more than one person or thing, e.g. the cars' roofs (n.b. not 'rooves')
  - one or more person or thing that already ends in 's', e.g. Mr Jones' pen
- indicating omission of a letter or letters in contractions, e.g. will've, haven't, and describe clearly how to use the apostrophe in each of the instances so far learnt

12 Commas

Definition: The word 'comma' has come to us through Latin, from the Greek *komma* meaning 'a piece cut out', i.e. separated. In this case, the comma separates groups of words.

Before learning about commas, students should:

- know the form of simple sentences
- know the correct punctuation for kinds of sentences
- have the ability to use both of the above in writing

There are several uses of the comma that students should now learn and practise. Also shown below are one or two that could be studied in more detail later. Knowing the functions of the comma is essential, not just for reading and writing well, but for accuracy and avoiding ambiguity.

With the introduction of the holistic approach to writing, many educationists adopted the attitude that 'such things as spelling and punctuation were of less importance than a total impression of its quality'. The results of this phase in educational history are now reflected in some of the poor standards and misleading written information that we see today. With sound *early* instruction, accurate and meaningful writing should result.

The presence or absence of a comma can totally alter the meaning of a sentence, and a comma put in the wrong place can result in misunderstanding and embarrassment.

Choose an appropriate time to point this out, using examples such as the following:

The car rolled about 100 metres from the corner.

or The car rolled, about 100 metres from the corner.

The activities at the end of this section not only provide practice in the uses of the comma, but also give opportunities to develop the imagination, expand vocabulary and read with expression.

The comma separates

It does this in several ways.

Items in a list

It marks off items in a list. There is usually no comma preceding the last item, as it is replaced by the word 'and'.
For example:

> I emptied my pocket and found a locker key, a 20-cent piece, a Mintie, a small screw and a piece of string.

Sense groups

It separates sense groups. This applies to phrases and clauses. At this stage students will probably not understand these terms, but they can be shown how the comma indicates where we should pause when reading aloud. We may raise our voice a little at the comma, to show that we have not yet reached the end of the sentence. We might use this pause to take a quick breath.
For example:

> He slipped into the classroom, just before the bell.

Or to mark off an extra piece of information:

> The driver, Mr Cramp, pulled back the gearstick.

When writing, we need to imagine how we would like someone to read what we have written and use commas accordingly.

Sometimes the positioning of commas is extremely important or our sentence could give quite the wrong meaning.

For example:

The man was found, shot dead, by his niece. [intended meaning]
or The man was found, shot dead by his niece. [unintended]

And without a comma at all, the sentence is ambiguous.

For a humorous adventure into the world of poor punctuation, we recommend the book *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss.

Direct speech

The comma separates direct speech from the narrative (see also direct speech using inverted commas on page 89.)
For example:

Mother called out, 'Come here at once.'

If the reference to the speaker follows the direct speech, the spoken part usually ends with a comma instead of a full stop.
For example:

'Come here at once,' called Mother.

A comma before the word 'and'

It is often said that a comma should not precede the word 'and'. However, this is quite misleading as the word 'and' is used to link many kinds of sense groups.

When *and* links two similar items or sentence forms, the comma has no place:

Breakfast and lunch
Jill chose ice-cream and Tom picked a cold drink.

Similarly, when actions follow closely on one another:

He strode out of the house and jumped into his car.

But where the two parts of the sentence are not balanced, or vary in structure, the comma indicates this and serves as a guide to the reader:

Then Darren suggested tying the rope to a branch, and that proved to be the answer.

In children's readers, commas are often inserted with particular care to help them split the sentences into sense groups.
For example:

Mum put away the dishes, and they left home, each carrying an empty basket.

12.1 Activities: commas

A

1. Students construct on the board a sentence that includes a list. They take turns to add an item, remembering to follow it with a comma (and omitting the one preceding the word 'and' at the end). They then choose one or two to be written in their grammar exercise books.
   Ideas for lists:
   a. We went shopping and bought …
   b. At the zoo we saw …
   c. For my birthday I had …
   d. On a camp you need …
   e. In our pantry we have …
   f. In the garage Dad has …
   g. We returned home to find the thieves had gone off with …
   h. The divers recovered a chest containing …
   i. The following items may be claimed from Lost Property …
   j. I would like to live on a farm, with …
2. Students are provided with a selected passage, which they read aloud, taking care to pause, raising their voice a little at each comma, for example:
   a. From *Kalulu The Hare* by Frank Worthington:
      It was when Hippopotamus had much hair on his body, like all Antelopes do, and ate grass by day, as all Antelopes do.
      And now, because of Fire, Hippopotamus lives in the river always, and is afraid to come out on dry land.

A

b. From *How Dumb Animals Talk* by Christina Rossetti

… of the cat

If she is unhappy, or in pain, or hungry, she meows. If she is angry, she sets up her back and her fur, moves her tail from side to side, and spits. If teased, she growls and puts back her ears. If she is treated in a way she does not like, up goes her tail straight in the air, and she marches out of the room.

3. Students insert commas into unpunctuated sentences, for example:
   a. Lucy was late for school(,) having got up late.
   b. Then after gobbling her breakfast(,) she had hiccups.
   c. Her belt dangling on the ground(,) she ran to catch the bus.
   d. Just as she reached the bus stop(,) her friend(,) Emma(,) trod on the end of the belt.
   e. Lucy fell backwards(,) treading on Jenny's foot(,) knocking her into a lamp post.
   f. Lucy started to laugh(,) but then realised her friend had hurt herself(,) so she said she was sorry(,)* and hugged her.
   g. Just then(,) the new(,) shiny green bus(,) driven by Emma's Uncle Gary(,) swept around the bend.

   * This comma is optional. Note, too, that a thing may be new, green and shiny, in which case it would read, shiny, green bus, or the word 'shiny' may describe the kind of green, as in the sentence above.

Checklist: commas

C

Students should now be able to:

- explain at least two different ways to use commas
- use commas correctly in a written list
- use commas correctly in written work to indicate sense groups

Inverted commas

13

Definition: The marks consist of the comma shape, while 'inverted' refers to the opening pair being written upside-down.

Before studying inverted commas, students should know about:

- the punctuation forms discussed previously to this section
- the correct construction of a simple sentence

Sometimes teachers refer to inverted commas, or speech marks, as 66's and 99's (note the use of the apostrophe here). This is a good way to remind children which of the marks open speech and which ones close it.

Direct speech is much easier for learners to write than indirect speech, which necessitates the use of conditional tenses (see page 146), but it is very important that they learn this punctuation at an early stage.

The best way to introduce young students to the use of inverted commas is through reading passages of dialogue, pointing out the way it's done. Students then need to practise a conversation piece, constructing it on the board together. Together they should look at a passage of dialogue from a school text, discussing the use of punctuation and the layout, noting that usually a new line is used to indicate a change of speaker.

Traditionally, double inverted commas (hence 66's and 99's) were used for speech marks. A quotation *within* speech would be marked by one at either end.

For example:

> "My favourite book is 'The Goblet of Fire', by J.K. Rowling," answered Julie.

Some modern texts choose to use these marks the opposite way round, as in 'My favourite book is "The Goblet of Fire", by J.K. Rowling,' answered Julie. Either is correct, but teachers in an education institution should agree on the form to be adopted.

13.1 Activities: inverted commas

A

1. Students insert the correct punctuation into sentences using direct speech.
   a. Dad said come quickly and you will see a goanna.
   b. I can see it shouted Anna jumping up and down.
   c. Shh don't shout whispered Dad you'll frighten it.
   d. What are you all looking at called Gemma from the kitchen window.
   e. Hush mouthed Anna her finger to her lips it's a goanna.
2. Students write a conversation they have had with one of the following, remembering that for each new speaker, we start a new line.
   a. the shopkeeper at the corner store
   b. a friend
   c. a policeman
   d. a favourite star or sportsperson
   e. an astronaut
   f. an uncle or aunt
3. Students are given a copy of a selected passage from a well-known book, with punctuation omitted. They reconstruct the passage, inserting punctuation. They then compare their version with the original.

   A suggested passage, from J.K. Rowling's *The Philosopher's Stone*:

   'I want to read that letter,' he said loudly.
   'I want to read it,' said Harry furiously, 'as it's mine.'
   'Get out, both of you,' croaked Uncle Vernon, stuffing the letter back inside its envelope. Harry didn't move.

'I want my letter,' he shouted.
'Let *me* see it,' demanded Dudley.
'Out!' roared Uncle Vernon …

A

Checklist: inverted commas

C

Students should now be able to:

- insert inverted commas into the correct place in given sentences
- write direct speech, correctly using inverted commas, commas and other punctuation already learnt, including apostrophes

14 Subject and predicate

Definition: The word 'subject' is from Latin *sub* meaning 'under' and 'ject' from *jacere* to throw – hence thrown under. The subject is that which is under our attention, i.e. the person or thing that we are talking about. The word 'predicate', also from Latin, means *pre*, 'before', and *dicate*, 'spoken'. It is something told to someone about the subject.

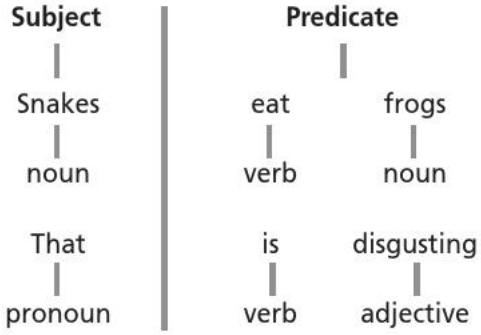
The students are already familiar with the term subject, being the person or thing that the sentence is about. Now is the time to confirm this – subjects *do* something, *be* something or *have* something.

Every sentence has two parts: the subject and the remaining part which tells something about the subject, and is called the predicate. Students should now learn the terms, and label sentences accordingly, as well as indicating the parts of speech of the individual words. This can be treated like a puzzle.

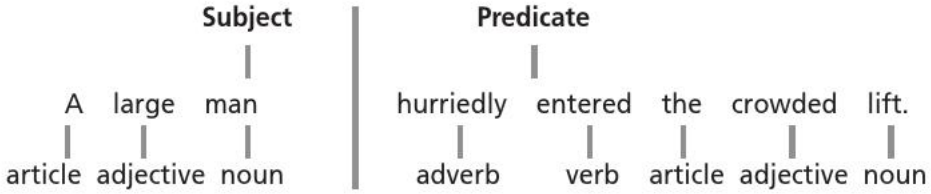
Firstly, some sentences should be labelled on the board with student participation. Students can then be given time to practise on their own in their grammar exercise books. Some sentences should be given for homework to demonstrate independent learning and accuracy. It is, as always, important for the work to be corrected to detect misunderstandings and errors.

'Parse' is from the Latin word *pars* meaning 'part' and describes the task we are doing when we divide a sentence to show how it is made up.

For example:



More information can be added to the sentence and allocated to the correct part.
For example:



14.1 Activities: subject and predicate

A

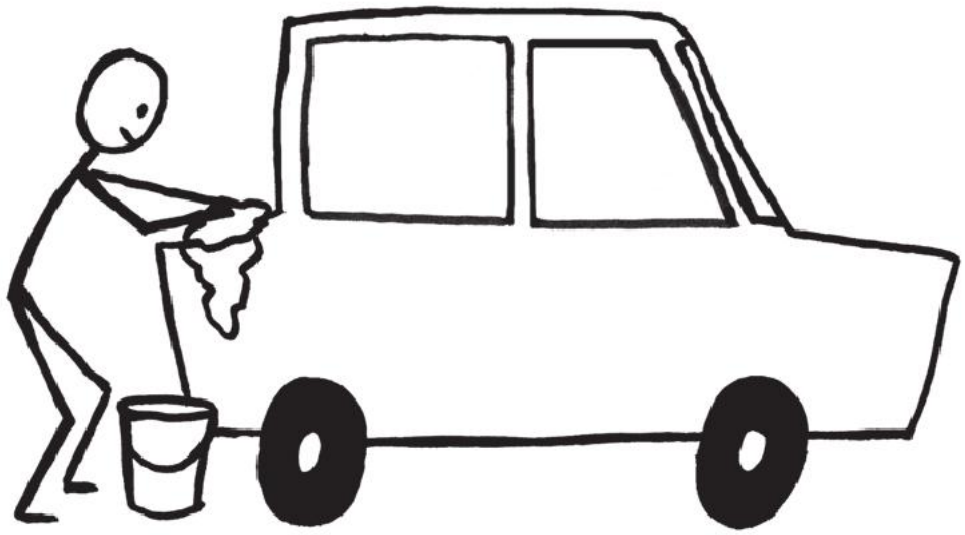
1. Students diagram sentences such as these.
   a. Peter bought me an ice-cream.
   b. My uncle took us to the show.
   c. Mum picked up her basket.
   d. The fisherman gave us a flounder.
   e. The number plate fell off his car.

   More difficult ones:
   f. In the morning the new tank will come.
   g. The old lady always sits here.
   h. Don't forget your homework.
   i. For lunch we had sausage rolls.
   j. When did you paint that?

A

Subject	Predicate
a. Peter	bought me an ice-cream.
noun (proper)	verb pronoun article noun
b. My uncle	took us to the show.
adjective noun	verb pronoun preposition article noun
c. Mum	picked up her basket and left.
noun	verb adjective noun article verb
d. The fisherman	gave us a flounder.
article noun	verb pronoun article noun
e. The number plate	fell off his old car.
article noun	verb adjective adjective noun
f. The new tank	will arrive in the morning.
article adjective noun	verb preposition article noun
g. The old lady	always sits here.
article adjective noun	adverb verb adverb
h. You (understood)	Don't (do not) forget your homework.
pronoun	verb adverb verb adjective noun
i. We	had *sausage rolls today.
pronoun	verb noun adverb
j. You	did paint that when?
pronoun	verb pronoun adverb

*Students can treat sausage rolls as one entity, that is one noun, or as a noun 'rolls' plus a qualifying adjective 'sausage'.



Tomorrow you must wash the car.

Checklist: subject and predicate

C

The student should now be able to:

- explain the term subject
- explain the term predicate
- correctly divide sentences into subject and predicate
- parse single sentences unaided
- recognise omitted subjects, understood as in commands – (You) go to bed. Don't (you) forget your lunch

Abbreviations

If the students are showing confidence in diagramming sentences and recognising the parts of speech, it is now appropriate for them to start using abbreviations, in order to save time and space. At this point too, articles may be included with their nouns unless otherwise requested.

The following abbreviations are commonly used in dictionaries, but need to be used accurately to avoid confusion. Lower case is used.

Word	Abbreviated	Word	Abbreviated
noun	n	preposition	prep
verb	vb	conjunction	conj
pronoun	pron	interjection	interj
adjective	adj	exclamation	excl
adverb	adv	subject	subj
article	art	predicate	pred

Objects – direct and indirect

15

Definition: The word 'object' is from Latin *ob* meaning 'against' or 'at', and *ject* meaning 'thrown'.

Before studying objects, students should:

- understand the function of verbs
- know past, present and future tenses, both simple and continuous
- recognise the subject wherever it comes in a sentence

The concept of the direct object is very straightforward. That of the indirect object is also, provided it is taught in sequence and well explained in examples. Although these terms may at first seem relevant only to the grammar lesson, their importance becomes more obvious when we are giving instruction about correct speech. Once you, too, become confident with the terms, you are empowered to guide and coach in debate and public speaking, as well as in good written English. So ensure that students fully understand the term direct object before you introduce the indirect object.

The direct object

The idea is that the object is that which the action is directed at; hence the term 'direct'. In simple terms, the object completes the action of the verb. If you can ask 'What?' after the verb, then the answer is the direct object.
For example:

My sister cooked pancakes.
The question: She cooked what?
The answer: pancakes

Therefore, *pancakes* is the object of the verb 'cooked' in this sentence.



My sister cooked pancakes.

A noun or pronoun following a preposition is called its object. *For example:*

It flew through *the air*.

The air is the object of the preposition 'through'.

15.1 Activities: direct objects

A

1. Students take turns asking *what?* questions. They could randomly call on another student to answer, for example:

   First student: What did you have for breakfast?
   2nd person: Baked beans.

   The answer is the direct object. One or two of these could be entered into students' grammar exercise books.

A

2. Sentences can be provided for students to complete by adding a direct object, for example:

   The Prime Minister gave [what?] – [a speech]

   a. We all had . . . . . (lunch)
   b. John's father drives . . . . . (a truck)
   c. I bought . . . . . (a dog-collar)
   d. My brother plays . . . . . (a clarinet)
   e. Dad grew . . . . . (big onions)
   f. Don't forget to take . . . . . (an umbrella)
   g. Just fill in . . . . . (this form)
   h. Let's book . . . . . (seats)
   i. They forgot their . . . . . (togs)

3. Students underline the subject and circle the object in these sentences.
   a. Please will you buy (some muffins) ?
   b. Don't you love motor racing?
   c. We all planted fruit trees.
   d. The kookaburra ate a poisonous snake.
   e. They let off a hundred coloured balloons.
   f. Tell us a story!
   g. We may have to sing a song.
   h. Can you tow the wreck home?
   i. All day I have been practising tai chi.
   j. That puppy chewed up Dad's slippers.

4. a. Provide students with a list of suitable words from which they make sentences, choosing a subject and a verb from the list, for example:

      hammer, Olivia, my cake, a mess, tea-tray, old socks, the blacksmith, toast, the sparrows, an old man.

   b. Students could circle the direct object in each of the sentences they have written and underline the verb that governs it.

The indirect object

Definition: The indirect object cannot be found by asking the question 'What?' It is the person or thing *to whom* or *for whom* the action of the verb takes place, that is, the person or thing *affected* by that action.
For example:

Joe passed me a note.

Ask 'What?' And you have the direct object which is a 'note'. Ask *to whom* or *for whom* and the answer is *me*; *me* is the indirect object.

I sent *him* a reply. Mrs Clobber gave *the class* detention.

In these examples *him* and *the class* are indirect objects.

15.2 Activities: indirect objects

A

1. Students mark the indirect objects in these sentences.
   a. My parents bought me a guitar.
   b. Can I play you a tune?
   c. Show the class your guitar.
   d. Sing us a song too.
   e. Give Mr Wells a go.
2. Students add indirect objects to these sentences.
   a. Jack bought a ring.
   b. He showed the ring.
   c. Carrie cooked dinner.
   d. Their parents congratulated.
   e. We'll send wedding invitations.
3. Can students change the sentences in the above two exercises by adding extra words? For example: from 1a – My parents bought a guitar for *me*.
   They write the sentences in their grammar exercise books.

A

4. Are the words in bold print direct or indirect objects? These can be answered orally, written or both.
   a. Jennifer tore **a page** of her book.
   b. I lent **her** the Sellotape.
   c. She showed **her teacher** the book.
   d. The Mayor has given **all of us** a holiday.
   e. We've bought you **tickets** for the concert.
5. Using the following verbs, students write sentences each containing an indirect object.
   a. take
   b. has written
   c. offered
   d. should bring
   e. write
   f. will cook
   g. drove
   h. weigh
   i. sold
   j. pour
6. Students diagram the following sentences to show the subject, verb, direct object and indirect object.
   a. Uncle Ben drew Dad a plan of his house.
   b. The mice left them a horrible mess.
   c. The band played everyone their favourite tunes.
   d. The council sent our neighbour a letter of complaint.
   e. The farmer dug us a bag of potatoes.
7. For each of the following words, students write two sentences, firstly using them as a direct object and secondly as an indirect object.
   a. the prime minister
   b. the crowd

I or me?

Now is the ideal time to instruct students in the correct use of the pronouns *I* and *me*. This causes much confusion but is very easily explained once students understand the difference between the subject and the object.

The following table can be copied into students' grammar exercise books and also be used for a display chart.

Personal pronouns as subject	
Singular	**Plural**
I gave Dad	***We*** gave Dad
You gave Dad	***You*** gave Dad
He/she/it gave Dad	***They*** gave Dad

The earlier versions of second person still found in old bibles, early poetry and Shakespeare's plays were thou (singular) and ye (plural).

Personal pronouns as direct and indirect objects	
Singular	**Plural**
Dad gave ***me***	Dad gave ***us***
Dad gave ***you***	Dad gave ***you***
Dad gave ***him/her/it***	Dad gave ***them***

Note: The pronoun stays the same when two people are mentioned. The trick is to think how it would be said *before* you add in the other person.
For example:

Subject: [*He* and] *I* want to buy the DVD.
Object: Dad gave [*him* and] *us* our pocket money.
Mum lost [*her* and] *me* in the shopping centre.

It is always polite to mention the other person first!

15.3 Activities: pronouns and objects

A

1. Students write their own sentences, or jointly compose them on the board, with various pronouns used as subjects or objects.
2. Students use the correct pronouns to fill gaps in sentences, using as many of the following as possible.

   he, them, us, him, you, I, her, we, she, they

   a. Tell . . . . . won't be there.
   b. Lucy sent . . . . . and . . . . . a postcard.
   c. . . . . and . . . . . are going to the fete.
   d. Mr Baugor told . . . . . off.
   e. Can . . . . . tell Jo and . . . . . about it?

Checklist: direct and indirect objects

C

Students should now be able to:

- define the term direct object and explain how to check it (Ask *what*?)
- define the term indirect object and explain how to recognise it (Ask *for* or *to* whom?)
- give examples of each in sentences
- explain the use of pronouns as objects, i.e. the correct use of I and me, etc.
- use pronouns correctly in written work

The complement

Definition: The word 'complement' is from Latin *complere*, meaning 'to fill' or 'complete'. In grammar that means to complete the sense. Some grammars interpret this to mean any completion, but by adopting its specific meaning we enable both ourselves and our students to differentiate clearly and painlessly between, for example, the use of *me* as the object and *I* as the complement.

Before studying the complement, students need to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the terms direct object and indirect object
- correct use of personal pronouns both as subject and as object

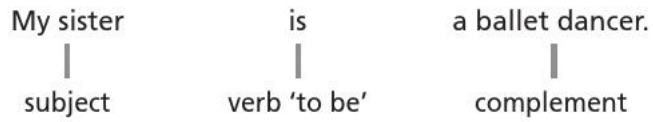
It would be clear, now, that teaching grammar is much easier with a structured program. After our recent study of subject and object, the term 'complement' will be easy to understand. Quickly check that all students can distinguish between the subject and the object.

Recognise the complement

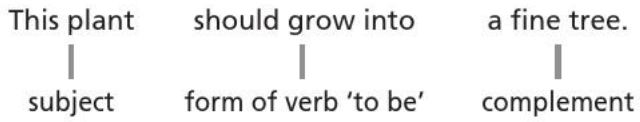
The complement completes the sense of a sentence in which the verb is any form of the verb 'to be' or any other verb with a parallel meaning, such as 'become', 'grow into', etc.

The easiest way to recognise a complement is to ask yourself whether the word following (or governed by) the verb is the very same person or thing as the subject of that verb. The object cannot be the same person or thing as the subject.

For example:



'My sister' and 'ballet dancer' are the same person!



'The plant' and 'fine tree' refer to the same thing.

A rule of thumb, recited by school children through generations, can still serve as a reminder: The verb 'to be' *never* takes an object.

A good tip for teachers

Just about every rule has an exception and experience has shown that if you know an exception and it concerns a common feature,

it is a good idea to teach the exception at the same time as teaching the rule. In this way, students are prepared. If they come across it for the first time on their own, unprepared, it can undermine their confidence.

At this point we can refer to the rule stated, concerning the subject. Because the complement refers to the same person as the subject, it is treated in the same way. Hence, correctly, in reply to a question 'Who is that?', we should say 'It is I'. But everyday speech accepts the colloquial version 'It is (or It's) me'. In the same way we prefer 'That's her' to 'That's she'.

15.4 Activities: objects and complements

A

1. As always, oral questions around the class involve all the students, show up misunderstanding and reinforce the lesson. Students in turn give a sentence containing a complement, for example:

   Elton John is *a good singer*.
   'Dr Who' is *my favourite program*.

   Note: The complement can be an adjective.
   Afterwards, students could write one or two examples in their grammar exercise books.
2. Students complete these sentences using a complement.
   a. The shopkeeper was . . . . . .
   b. Three blind mice . . . . . .
   c. That looks like . . . . . .
   d. You appear . . . . . .
   e. The ugly sisters were . . . . . .
   f. He had better be . . . . . .
   g. Marcus is becoming . . . . . .
   h. Our team will be . . . . . .
   i. Our town is . . . . . .
   j. Those horses look . . . . . .

A

3. Students make two columns in their books and head them *Object* and *Complement*. Dictate sentences, each containing either an object or complement. The students then write the object or complement only, in the appropriate column, for example:

Object	**Complement**
	an amazing performance

Note: The complement can be an adjective.

a. The belly dancer gave *an amazing performance.*
b. Dad is *a first class mechanic*.
c. I could never be *a surgeon*.
d. You have lost *the plot*.
e. This is *my first attempt*.
f. That street sign is *bent*.
g. I should like *a hamburger*.
h. Hamburgers are *my favourite.*
i. That is *my lunchbox*.
j. You have taken *the wrong one*.



This is my lunchbox.

4. Students name two parts of speech that complements can be. [noun/adjective]
5. Students name the part of speech of the complements in these sentences.

A

a. That tree is *a silky oak*.
b. This tree looks *dead*.

6. Students pick out the complements in the following passage.

> Let's put on a pantomime and we will all take part. It would be Aladdin and the Forty Thieves. I should love to be one of the thieves. They were really comic rogues. Jason would make a perfect Ali Baba and you could do the genie's voice. If we practise our parts, the show will be ready for the Christmas party.

7. Can students explain the difference between a complement and a compliment? They should write one sentence containing a complement and another sentence containing a compliment.
8. Students fill in the gaps with *I* or *me*.
   a. The coach gave Sandra and . . . . . an extra lesson.
   b. What shall you and . . . . . have for tea?
   c. That cake is to be shared between you and . . . . .
   d. You and . . . . . should thank the coach.
   e. He is very good to you and . . . . .
9. Students fill in the gaps with *I*, *he*, *she*, *him* or *her*.
   a. . . . . and I have tickets for the match.
   b. Dad will take . . . . . and . . . . . on the train.
   c. John says . . . . . and . . . . . can go to the cinema afterwards.
   d. Give . . . . . the tickets for . . . . .
   e. Josie gave . . . . . and . . . . . money for popcorn.

Checklist: objects and complements

C

Students should now be able to:

- recognise the objects, direct or indirect, in a simple sentence
- spot the complement in a simple sentence
- explain the difference in grammatical terms
- give an example in which we break the rule that the verb 'to be' never takes an object

16 More about verbs

Before further study of verbs, students should know:

- the definition and function of a verb
- the terms and function of the subject
- the concept of number, i.e. singular and plural
- the difference between a finite and a non-finite verb
- the concept of simple tenses, past, present and future

'Brilliant minds (if only they could write)' was the headline in a recent edition of the *Courier Mail* (3 October 2006). Professor Michael Good, director of QIMR (Queensland Institute for Medical Research), has stated that as many as one third of PhD students at the institute produced unsatisfactory written English, and remedial classes had been established there. The deficiencies concerned basics, particularly in the area of punctuation and including a verb in every sentence.

This emphasises the importance of ensuring that, as early as primary school, students establish an understanding of verbs and various verb forms. Contrary to the view expressed by some educationists, it is not sufficient for grammar to be dealt with 'by the way' or 'as it arises within subjects', for reasons already mentioned. Not all teachers, especially those of subjects other than English, are sufficiently secure in their own knowledge of grammar to pass it on. Reminders and correction of errors should be ongoing, but the establishment of a core knowledge structure, including a command of terminology, must first be established.

The assumption that exercises such as parsing are too abstract to be relevant is a contradiction. Parsing, for example, demonstrates students' recognition of the parts of speech. It is the term for an exercise that reveals the scope of their understanding, just as the

acts of multiplying and dividing demonstrate a student's understanding and command of number principles. The question should not be *whether* you do it, but *how well* you do it.

In this section, we study some more terms, which are very simple in concept and provide us with more language to talk about language – invaluable for studying a foreign one – and skills for the improvement of written expression.

As we think about the categories to follow, we learn much more about how our fascinating language works. If an alien from outer space were to land on earth and see a box for the first time, we might try to explain that it was a container to put things in. If we were then to actually put things into the box, the meaning would be so much more real. In the same way, the more clearly we can demonstrate and practise our explanations, the better they will be understood.

We can think of verbs as the hub of every sentence. A sentence need not include an adjective, an adverb, a preposition or an object, but it must contain at least one finite verb.

Subjects matching verbs

The subject of a sentence must match its verb. This applies mainly to number, but there are some pronouns that cause confusion and warrant attention. Clear thinking enables us to avoid mistakes.

Consider the following pronouns:

Singular	**Plural**
none (not one)	both (two)
anyone	several (more than two, but not many)
someone	
everybody (everyone)	
either/neither (one)	

For example:

no one/neither *has* arrived
but both/all *have* arrived

Uncountable forms are mainly in the singular.
For example:

much, little, less ...
Too much rain *floods* (sing.) the river

Take care with the pronoun *some*, which can refer to an unspecified number in the plural or an uncountable quantity. Consider which is the case here:

Too much food *is* (sing.) bad for you.
There are many foods available – some *are* better for you than others.

Similarly, it is correct to say 'May I have *less* meat' (you cannot count meat), but we must ask for *fewer* potatoes because they can be counted.

16.1 Activities: matching pronouns and verbs

A

1. Students use a selection of the above pronouns in their own sentences and underline the verb, for example:

   Neither: Neither of the boys *is* ready to go.

2. Students enter a verb (in the present tense) or complete the one given.
   a. No one . . . . . toad for breakfast.
   b. Both . . . . . coming to the show.
   c. Everybody . . . . . a dog.
   d. Either you or I . . . . . misunderstood.
   e. Someone . . . . . my drink, every day.
   f. Several . . . . . at the window.
   g. Neither of us . . . . . graffiti on walls.

Checklist: subject and verb agreement

C

Students should now be able to:

- list given pronouns under the headings Singular and Plural
- follow the given pronouns with the correct verb (orally and in writing)

Transitive and intransitive verbs

Definition: the word 'transitive' is from Latin *trans* meaning 'across'. A transitive verb is one that moves across to an object. A verb that does not have (move across to) an object is therefore in-(not)transitive.

Before studying transitive and intransitive verbs, students should know:

- the definition and function of the object
- the difference between a direct and an indirect object
- the distinction between an object and a complement

Some verbs can be either transitive or intransitive, according to whether or not they have an object in a given sentence.
For example:

Transitive: We bought *an ice-cream*.

The verb *bought* moves across to its object, *an ice-cream*.

Intransitive: I hope you don't snore tonight.

A verb such as *snore* cannot take an object. You cannot snore something!

Did you wash this morning?

There is no object, so in this sentence the verb *wash* is intransitive.

but Did you wash your face this morning?

Here the object is 'your face' so the verb *wash* is transitive.

Remember, the trick is to ask 'what?' after the verb. If you have an answer, that answer is an object.

16.2 Activities: transitive and intransitive verbs

A

1. Students take turns to give a sentence that has a transitive verb.
2. Students are given a list of verbs which they enter into two columns, labelled Transitive and Intransitive.
   a. walk
   b. send
   c. wonder
   d. sell
   e. groan
   f. collide
   g. dissect
   h. destroy
   i. peep
   j. hesitate
3. Students choose verbs from those below to write two sentences for each, one transitive and one intransitive.
   a. choose
   b. sing
   c. draw
   d. play
   e. investigate
   f. meet
   g. paint
   h. imagine
   i. jump
4. Select (mark or list) the transitive verbs in the following passage.

   We saw this horrible shape. It was getting closer! We dropped our tools and ran. The shape was following us. Ben shouted, 'I can hear a motor.' I heard that sound too, but I did not stop to look.

We reached the house, grabbed the door handle and tugged the heavy wooden door open. Just then, the dark shape covered us and moved on. It was just the shadow of an aeroplane! We don't see aeroplanes here very often.

Answer: saw, dropped, was following, hear, heard, reached, grabbed, tugged, covered, see

5. In two minutes, students think of as many verbs as they can, that can be both transitive and intransitive.

A

Checklist: transitive and intransitive verbs

C

Students should now be able to:

- give the meaning of (a) a transitive verb and (b) an intransitive verb
- select and classify transitive and intransitive verbs from a sentence or passage
- recognise verbs that can be of either kind

Active and passive voice

Like so many other features of grammar that we have been practising, voice describes something simple that occurs in our everyday speech. Understanding how it works and having words with which we can talk about it enables us to manipulate our own language or learn to use another one with greater skill.

The terms 'active' and 'passive' apply only to verbs. A verb can be one or the other, and the verb form actually is telling us more about its subject.

A verb in the active voice is one in which the subject performs the action of the verb.

For example:

Jasmin kicked the ball.

Jasmin is the subject and she did the kicking.

The word 'passive' is from Latin *passivus* meaning 'suffering'. A verb in the passive voice is one in which the subject suffers the action, i.e. it happens *to* the subject. So we can say:

The ball was kicked by Jasmin.

In this sentence, the subject is 'the ball' and it suffered the action of being kicked.

The passive form is composed of an auxiliary verb plus a participle. Logic tells us that the passive voice can be formed only with a transitive verb, as the verb must act on an object. A sentence written in the active voice and having a transitive verb (i.e. it has an object) can be turned around to make it passive.

For example:

A silly boy *swallowed* *my marble.*
active voice object

My marble *was swallowed* by a silly boy.
subject passive voice

The object of the active verb has become the subject of the passive one.

The choice between the use of active or passive voice in a sentence depends on where the speaker or writer wishes to lay the emphasis. In writing we choose to use the active or passive voice according to which is most effective in our narrative.

16.3 Activities: active and passive voice

A

1. Students write down three things that happened yesterday in sentences that have an active, transitive verb. Then they write the same sentences in the passive voice, for example:

A

An ambulance took my neighbour to hospital.
My neighbour was taken to hospital in an ambulance.

They then underline the subject in each of their sentences.

2. Orally students in turn give a sentence with an active transitive verb and the next student changes it to passive.
3. Students underline the verbs in given sentences and identify them as active or passive, for example:
   a. Dad did not have a good day yesterday. [active]
   b. He had been burnt by the toaster. [passive]
   c. Then he was stung by a bee. [passive])
   d. He lost his hat. [active]
   e. It had been left on the tractor. [passive].
4. In writing or orally, students give sentences using the following verbs in first the active voice and then the passive voice.
   a. clean
   b. steal
   c. interrupt
   d. purchase
   e. frighten

Checklist: active and passive voice

C

Students should now be able to:

- explain the term voice and the meaning of active and passive
- identify active or passive in sentences
- locate the subject of each verb
- change active verbs or sentences into passive ones and vice versa

17 Participles

Definition: The word 'participle' comes to us via French, via Latin, from Greek, and means 'part-taking'. In grammar a participle is a part taken from a complete, or finite, verb form for another purpose.

Before studying participles, students should understand:

- the meaning of tense, which shows the time that an action takes place, in the past, present or future
- the meaning and use of auxiliary verbs to complete tenses
- the meaning of the terms 'finite' and 'non-finite'

Knowledge of participles is extremely important as they help to form many of our tenses. While the present participle is easy to recognise, the past participle can be tricky, as it is often confused with the past tense. It can, therefore, be helpful to use charts to distinguish those forms that cause most errors, both in speech and in writing. Common errors occur with such verbs as *ring* – past tense *rang*, past participle *rung*. So mistakes need to be corrected at the earliest stage, before wrong habits set in. Participles occur in our earliest conversation.

Participles are very flexible as they can become various parts of speech according to the work they do. They can also be added to an auxiliary (helper) verb in order to form a complete tense. Participles are of two kinds.

Present participles

The present participle is formed by adding *-ing* to the base verb form.

For example:

eat + ing = eating

Using auxiliary verbs, we form finite continuous tenses:

They were *eating* – past
They are *eating* – present
They will be *eating* – future

Remember – the 'ing' form on its own is known as the present participle, the tense being indicated by the auxiliary. So continuous tenses always have at least two parts.

Past participles

These are a little more tricky than present participles as they are not all formed in the same way. Some are the same as the past tense, but some are different again and need to be learnt. Because, as children, we adopt the speech we hear around us, some grow up using ungrammatical forms and many small children make up forms by analogy with others, such as 'I bringed (or 'brang') my books' and 'I cutted my finger'. Even if they are not put right at home, they will learn the correct forms at school, given practice in both speech and writing.

Again, charts for the wall and in the grammar exercise books, quick 5-minute tests and a little relevant homework provide very useful reinforcement. It doesn't put a child down to correct his speech, rather it improves his chances in life later.

Past participles are of two kinds.

Same as the past (or present) tense

These look the same as the past tense and end in 'ed', 'd' or 't'. These are said to be regular (or weak).
For example:

ed – laughed

d – loved

t – crept, left

They may be the same as the present tense also as in *cut*, *put* etc.

Remember, too, that some are spelt with 'ed' though the ending sounds like 't', for example: picked, bewitched, boxed

Different from the past tense

These are the participles that are different from the past tense, usually because the inside vowel changes. They are called irregular (or strong).

For example:

Present tense	Past tense	Past participle
break	broke	broken

The tip for telling the difference between the past tense and the past participle is to put 'I have' in front of it. If it sounds correct, then that is the past participle.

For example, which sounds correct:

I have broke.

or I have broken.

Adjectival participles and gerunds

Participles are one of the most flexible and useful word categories in our language. When not being used to form finite verbs, they can serve as adjectives or nouns. This expands our descriptive ability and enables us to vary sentence patterns – a skill referred to by Dr Moore as lacking in the work of many PhD students at the QIMR.

Grammar and spelling are improved with skilled use of participles, though students are often quite unaware that words they are using are participles, formed from verbs. Choose plain terms for each category and use them consistently so as not to confuse.

Before studying participles as adjectives and nouns, students should:

- understand the use of nouns as subjects, objects and complements
- understand the function of adjectives
- recognise verb forms which include participles
- be able to name the present and past participles of any common verb

Participles as adjectives

These are sometimes referred to as adjectival participles or participial adjectives. The former term is more easily recognisable.

Both present and past participles can be used as adjectives. Remember, the present participle always ends with 'ing'.

For example:

My sister has a *talking* doll – present

The doll has a *broken* finger – past

Gerunds – participles as nouns

A participle used as a noun is called a gerund. Gerunds end with 'ing', being present participles. They may serve as subjects, objects or even complements in sentences, and they stand alone, that is without an auxiliary.

For example:

Subject:	*Rowing* strengthens muscles.
Object:	My brother teaches *rowing*.
Complement:	My favourite sport is *rowing*.

Past participles are seldom used as nouns. They occur only in specialised or formal contexts.

For example:

The police published photos of their most *wanted*.

We distributed food to the *disadvantaged*.

17.1 Activities: participles

A

1. Students choose colourful or humorous adjectival participles to qualify given nouns. Check that they really are participles, as in *coiled* snake, not slippery snake.

   a. clouds
   b. clarinet
   c. cow
   d. boots
   e. ice-cream
   f. pencil
   g. road
   h. garbage
   i. house
   j. bus

2. Students are given two minutes to write down as many adjectival participles they can think of for:

   a. a shop
   b. a jaguar
   c. a parachute

3. Students form adjectival participles from given verbs, present, past or both, and apply each one to a suitable noun, for example:

   break – breaking weather, broken cup

   a. spill
   b. drink
   c. dig
   d. swell
   e. ring
   f. write
   g. lay
   h. grind
   i. rise
   j. oil



broken jug

A

4. One student begins by naming an object. The second student qualifies it with a suitable adjectival participle. If correct, they can then supply a noun for the next student; and so on until all have had a turn.
5. Students use present participles as nouns. In turn they answer the question: What do you like doing? All answers must end in 'ing', such as skating, cycling.
6. Students write sentences using a participle from each given verb. They underline the participle and state the function of each, for example:

   bite – He put ointment on his <u>bitten</u> leg. (adj)

   a. hold
   b. deliver
   c. wear
   d. swear
   e. fold

Checklist: participles

C

Students should now be able to:

- give the meaning of the word 'participle'
- describe its three functions, as verb part, adjective or noun
- recognise participles in a passage and classify them
- use participles effectively and correctly in written work
- explain the term 'gerund' and describe its function

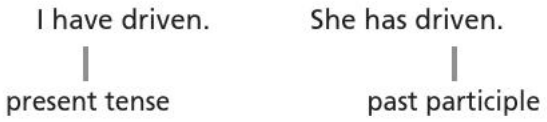
18 Perfect tenses

As the previous examples show, participles added to auxiliary verbs can form perfect tenses. Perfect means 'done (or carried out) completely'. The table for perfect tenses shows how we can use them, and practice with these can help students to use them more naturally and to spell some of the less regular forms correctly.

Some students need more practice than others, so discretion may govern the use of charts. Errors in written work should be remedied in context, but it is important for all students to understand the forms of correct language. Again, board work is appropriate, with written examples to be used for reference. Practical activities should be carried out to prevent tedium.

The present perfect tense

The past participle is added to the *present* tense of the auxiliary verb 'to have'.
For example:

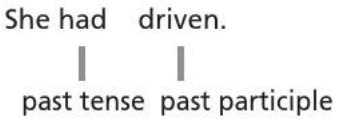


It tells of an action that has taken place, and been completed, at some time in the past.

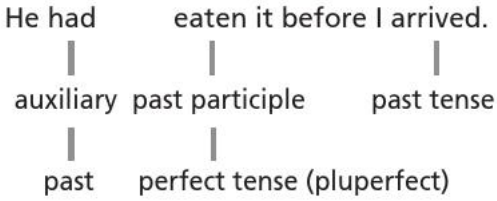
The past perfect tense (pluperfect)

The past participle is added to the *past* tense of the auxiliary verb 'to have'.

For example:

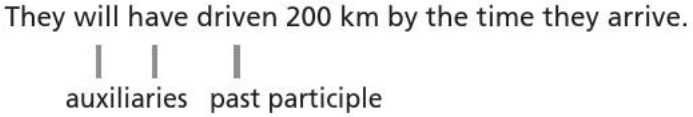


This tense takes us another step back in time. The action was completed before another one took place.
For example:



The future perfect tense

Both auxiliaries 'to have' and 'to be' are used to form the future perfect tense. This tense shows that an action will have been completed at some time in the future.
For example:



A table of perfect tenses – active voice

	Past perfect	Present perfect	Future perfect
Singular			
Person			
1st	I had hidden	I have hidden	I shall have hidden
2nd	You had hidden	You have hidden	You will have hidden
3rd	He/she/it had hidden	He/she/it has hidden	He/she/it will have hidden

A table of perfect tenses – active voice (continued)

Plural			
Person			
1st	We had hidden	We have hidden	We shall have hidden
2nd	You had hidden	You have hidden	You will have hidden
3rd	They had hidden	They have hidden	They will have hidden

A table of perfect tenses – passive voice

	Past perfect	**Present perfect**	**Future perfect**
Singular			
Person			
1st	I had been told	I have been told	I shall have been told
2nd	You had been told	You have been told	You will have been told
3rd	He/she/it had been told	He/she/it has been told	He/she/it will have been told
Plural			
Person			
1st	We had been told	We have been told	We shall have been told
2nd	You had been told	You have been told	You will have been told
3rd	They had been told	They have been told	They will have been told

18.1 Activities: perfect tenses

A

1. Students take turns to mime an action and the others guess or write down what the action is. The answers will be present participles, such as *laughing*, *cooking* etc. Students should think up their own actions.
2. Students complete a tense table with the verb 'to forget' in the active voice.

	Past perfect	**Present perfect**	**Future perfect**
Singular			
Person			
1st			
2nd	You had		
3rd		He/she it has	
Plural			
Person			
1st			
2nd			
3rd			We shall have

3. Students complete a tense table with the verb 'to rescue' in the passive voice.

	Past perfect	**Present perfect**	**Future perfect**
Singular			
Person			
1st			
2nd			You will have been rescued
3rd		He/she it	
Plural			
Person			
1st			
2nd			
3rd	They		

A

4. Students are given the list of verbs on the left, and fill in a table showing the past tense and past participle of each.

Verb	Past tense	Past participle
a. sweep	swept	swept
b. take	took	taken
c. bring	brought	brought
d. tread	trod	trodden
e. be	was	been
f. write	wrote	written
g. leave	left	left
h. sting	stung	stung
i. ring	rang	rung
j. go	went	gone

5. Students answer the following questions by adding three tasks that they/others have done.
   a. What have you done so far today?
      1. I have . . . . . .
      2. . . . . .
      3. . . . . .
   b. What has your brother/sister done today?
      1. She . . . . . .
      2. . . . . .
      3. . . . . .
6. Students match each verb to its tense:

a. I shall have eaten too much.	Past perfect
b. He was telling a good joke.	Future
c. See how they run.	Future perfect
d. They will take us to the wedding.	Past continuous
e. Maureen had bent her ruler.	Present

   a. Future perfect, b. Past continuous, c. Present, d. Future, e. Past perfect

Checklist: perfect tenses

C

Students should now be able to

- define the term 'participle'
- state the present participle of any common verb
- state the past participle of most common verbs
- complete past, present and future tenses using present and past participles together with auxiliaries
- change the tense in a sentence to another tense, from those already learnt
- recognise the tense used in a given sentence

19 More about adjectives and adverbs

Numeral adjectives (numbering)

These are the words that qualify nouns according to number. They include:

- cardinal adjectives – state how many
  For example:

  one fine day *ten* green bottles

- ordinal adjectives – state order or position
  For example:

  the *second* volume the *twelfth* day

Indefinite adjectives

These give an idea of number but are not exact.
For example:

Many ships sailed; *some* reached port; *several* sank.

Quantitative adjectives

As the name suggests, they indicate quantity.
For example:

I *have little* money; in fact, I haven't *any* money.

This is a good time to explain to students the difference between the words *few* and *less*. *Few* is applied to items that can be numbered or counted. *Less* is used for things that cannot be counted separately.
For example:

few people; few ships; few opportunities
less sugar; less happy; less increase

Interrogative adjectives

These ask which or what.
For example:

Whose boots are they?
Which door did you come through?

Possessive adjectives

These accompany a noun and indicate possession.
For example:

The dog licked *its* paw.

19.1 Activities: adjectives

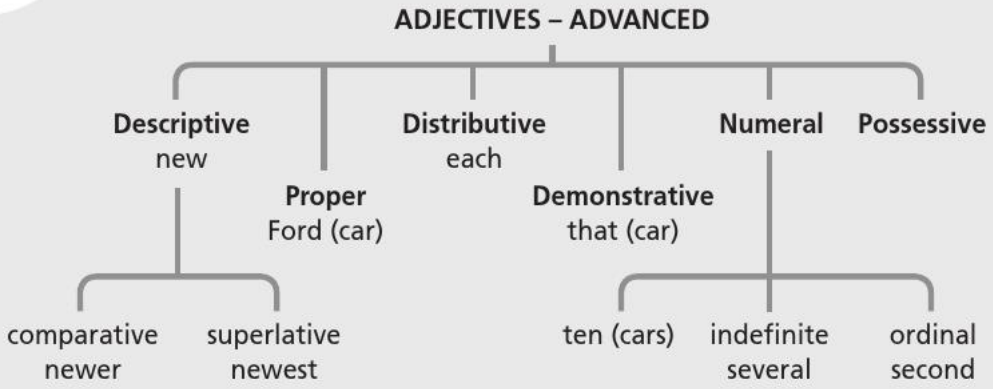
A

1. Students mark and list the adjectives in the passage below.

> My brother got a *Ford* car. It is second-hand, but newer than mine. There were ten cars for sale. The newest had several dents in it, so he chose that one which was his second choice. Now each member of the family has a car.

A

2. Students add to their flowchart for adjectives.



Adverbs of comparison

These are treated in the same way as adjectives, using *er* and *est* or *more* and *most.*
For example:

Shane ran *fast.*
Ricky ran *faster.*
Guess who ran *fastest*?

or politely, *more* politely, *most* politely.

Adverbs modifying other parts of speech

Adverb modifying an adverb

For example:

Gilchrist scored runs really fast.
adv adv

We clapped him very loudly.

adv adv

Adverb modifying an adjective

For example:

He was so pleased.

adv adj

Adverbs formed from adjectives

For example:

My shoelace is *loose*. [adj]
I tied it too *loosely*. [adv]

19.2 Activity: adjectives and adverbs

A

Students form adjectives and adverbs using the given nouns, for example:

Noun	Adjective	Adverb
hope	hopeless	hopelessly
speed		
pain		
waste		
fool		

20 More punctuation

Before studying more punctuation, check that students can recognise, understand and use correctly the following punctuation marks: full stop, question mark, exclamation mark, comma, inverted commas and apostrophe.

So far, the exercises have been mainly straightforward and not purposely complex, as they are designed to test the students' learning and assess the efficacy of the instruction.

Inevitably the students will come across variations in sentence structure that test their skills and sometimes ours as well. In general, unless they are unreasonably intricate or complex – in which case we may leave them to grammarians to unravel – they can be analysed by logic. Before we embark on studying more complex but well-constructed sentences there are a few gaps to fill. So, in this section, we uncover some of the classifications that further clarify the terms we have been using and are now familiar with.

Firstly, we look at the remaining punctuation marks, understanding of which will enable students to reach a higher level of maturity in their own composition.

Colons

Definition: The word is from Greek, *kolon*, meaning 'a limb' and is used to indicate that some connected information is to follow.

- The colon's most common use is to precede a list, especially of items consisting of more than one word (note its use after 'for example').

For example:

> Here are some of the things you can do at our zoo: get close to wild animals, feed the monkeys, cuddle a koala and observe a platypus.

- The colon can provide a stop (or a short pause) between two balanced parts of a sentence, in which the second part explains or furthers the information given in the first part.
For example:

> I got our tickets for the final: they had nearly sold out.

Note, too, how the use of the colon can make the narrative more dramatic than when it is expressed in an ordinary sentence.
For example:

> He ran to the opening: it was blocked by a fallen rock.

Compare with:

> He ran to the opening, but found it was blocked by a fallen rock.

- Colons are used to introduce quotations.
For example:

> Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' opens with the words: 'Hence! Home, you idle Creatures, get you home.'

- This use of the colon would be one with which every modern child would be familiar! That which separates parts of numerals, as in time:

> 6:30 9:00

and in some digital time-pieces, one dot refers to a.m. and two dots to p.m.

A 20.1 Activities: colons

1. Students write an advertisement for the things you can do at:
   a. a fun park
   b. Underwater World
   c. a museum
2. Students answer time questions with digital numerals.
   a. When did you get up this morning?
   b. What time do you start school?
   c. When do you have lunch?
3. Students use colons to write these sentences in a more dramatic way.
   a. He got badly hurt when he fell off his skateboard.
   b. We couldn't get in because Emma had gone off with the key.
   c. A green ant bit me, so I screamed.
   Note: It may be more effective to change around the order of words.
4. Students find a quotation from one of their books and introduce it, mentioning the speaker. See the example from Shakespeare on the previous page.

Semicolons

Margaret Fullerton, in 'Summer On The Lakes' 1844, likened semicolons to the stops in a paragraph of thoughts about one's life. This is probably a very good description, as semicolons provide a pause between connected thoughts and lie somewhere between commas and full stops. For the more mature writer, semicolons are very effective because they suggest a balance, but to avoid misuse and confusion, it is wise not to introduce semicolons too early.

Perhaps the best way to describe semicolons is to say that they link associated thoughts or statements.
For example:

The mantis rested on a green leaf; you might never notice it there.
He had no food; nor did he have any money.

Another use of semicolons, which is similar, separates thoughts set within lines of poetry while preserving the poetic flow.
For example:

I laid me down upon the shore
And dreamed a little space;
I heard the great waves break and roar;
The sun was on my face.
(from 'Pre-Existence' by Francis Cornford)

Lynne Truss reminds us that only full sentences should be joined by semicolons – otherwise one may fall into the habit of running on with a kind of stream of consciousness sentence structure, in the manner of Virginia Woolf, which is not generally acceptable.

Hyphens

Definition: 'hyphen' is from Greek *huphen*, meaning 'together' and refers to the combination of two words.

Many compound words have evolved from two hyphenated words and this seems to happen by way of a natural progression as an object becomes more common.
For example:

night school, but night-light and nightgown.

The best advice for students is to check with a dictionary. Students with a good command of language will probably, themselves, develop the ability to form hyphenated expressions, which are phrase-based and often combine words of two different parts of speech. It is a good idea to draw attention to them in literature and improve students' awareness of the flexibility of language and the wonderful tools at their command.
For example:

age-defying moisturiser
finger-marked photos
never-to-be-forgotten moment

Parentheses – brackets and dashes

Definition: This word from Greek *para* – 'beyond' and *enthesis* – 'put in' means 'added extra'. So in writing it refers to information extra to the main sentence. The sentence is complete without the part in parenthesis. However, the extra part is added to give further information or explanation to that in the main sentence. The extra part is like something just thought of, mid sentence, and as such, has a more abrupt sense than something separated by commas.

Students are reminded that, should they use parenthesis, the parts either side should be grammatically complete without it.

Brackets

Definition: The word 'bracket' is from French *braguette* meaning 'a codpiece', the term for the curved support piece inside men's breeches.

Brackets indicate a fairly formal division of a sentence, marking off extra information.

For example:

> A restaurant called L'Apostrophe in Reims (address on request) …
>
> Such inverted commas (usually single, rather than double) are understood …
>
> In her autobiography 'Giving up the Ghost' (2003), Hilary Mantel reveals …

In addition, we have the formal use of brackets to indicate grouping in algebra.

> $2a(4b + 6) =$

Brackets of shapes other than the curve are usually editor's devices for selected types of additional information.

Dashes

These are generally less formal than other kinds of punctuation and more conversational. Lynne Truss suggests that they are more friendly, as though they are welcoming the extra thought inside as opposed to brackets which imply intrusion.

Dashes are used singly, as a comment added to the end of a sentence, or double for one included within.

For example:

> On went the pilgrims through the years – some on foot and some on horseback. They went overseas – to Mexico we think – and were never heard of again.

One dash can lead to a dramatic effect.

For example:

> Something floated past the dinghy – it was a human hand!

Ellipsis

Definition: The word is via Latin from the Greek, *ellipsis*, meaning 'coming short' – hence an omission, and it is indicated by three dots …

The omissions are mainly for two purposes.

- Leaving out something not relevant to the rest of the statement, often in a quotation.
  F*or example:*

  > In Africa, while staying near the swamp, we contracted malaria.
  > In Africa …. we contracted malaria.

- For dramatic effect.
  For example:

  > The glass shattered on the floor and a form appeared in the window …
  > 'It's … It's … a g…ghost,' she whispered.

A 20.2 Activities: punctuation

1. The best way to learn about the use of punctuation is by reading good literature of various kinds. Students need to read aloud to appreciate fully what the punctuation is telling them. This can be done in turns around the class or by reading parts in plays and should be accepted as a regular classroom activity. In this way, students become familiar with punctuation use and appreciate its functions. Choose passages from set texts, selected drama, political speeches or Shakespeare's plays. Allow students sometimes to choose texts themselves.
2. Students write a paragraph on a subject of their choice, in which they demonstrate the use of one or more given punctuation mark.
3. Students are given sentences to punctuate, either with specified marks or with those they themselves deem to be most suitable. The following examples are taken from *Victorian Readers IV Edition* 1989. Each one is a single sentence.
   a. Mrs Cratchits made the gravy ready beforehand in a little saucepan hissing hot.
   b. His parents called him Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson but when he was older he preferred to spell his name the French way Louis.
   c. Upon this my savage for so I call him now made a motion to me to lend him my sword.
   d. And Hereward was drenched says The Chronicle with wine and beer and sorely baited and badgered.
   e. I'm called William that's the name you'll have to call if you want anything, just you say William and I'll be round in a second my names William and I've been here a matter of seven and thirty years.

C Checklist: punctuation

Students should now be able to

- explain the usage for all forms of punctuation
- punctuate a sentence of average length and moderate complexity
- demonstrate the use of a variety of punctuation marks in their own composition

More pronouns

21

Before further study of pronouns, students should be sure of:

- the meaning of the term pronoun
- the fact that a pronoun takes the place of a noun and cannot be used with it
- recognising and naming personal and demonstrative pronouns

There are some pronouns that are less easily categorised without some explanation. It is important that students recognise that they are pronouns and understand why that is so. While the names of the subclasses do explain their functions this understanding is more important than memorising their names.

Interrogative pronouns

Definition: 'Interrogative', from Latin *interrogativus* means, simply, 'questioning'. So interrogative pronouns not only take the place of nouns, but also ask questions. In other words, the questioner wants to know something about a person or thing.

These pronouns, like others, take different forms according to the part they play in the sentence.

For example:

As the subject:

Who – *Who* are you?

As the object:

(For a person) whom – *Whom* did you see?

(For a thing) what – *What* did you see?

Or object of a preposition – whom – At *whom* was it thrown?

Possessive pronouns

Whose was she holding?
Is it *yours* or *mine*?

Indefinite and distributive pronouns

Refer to the section 'Subjects matching verbs' on page 109.

To students whose knowledge of pronouns is limited to personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns do not, at once, seem to be connected. The term indefinite pronoun is self-explanatory. Its indefiniteness is shown by its referral to no one or no thing in particular.

Indefinite pronouns

The following are most of the indefinite pronouns in common use:

Persons		Things
one	everyone	everything
nobody	no one	nothing
anybody	anyone	anything
somebody	someone	something

For example:

Nobody could do anything.
Can't somebody do something?

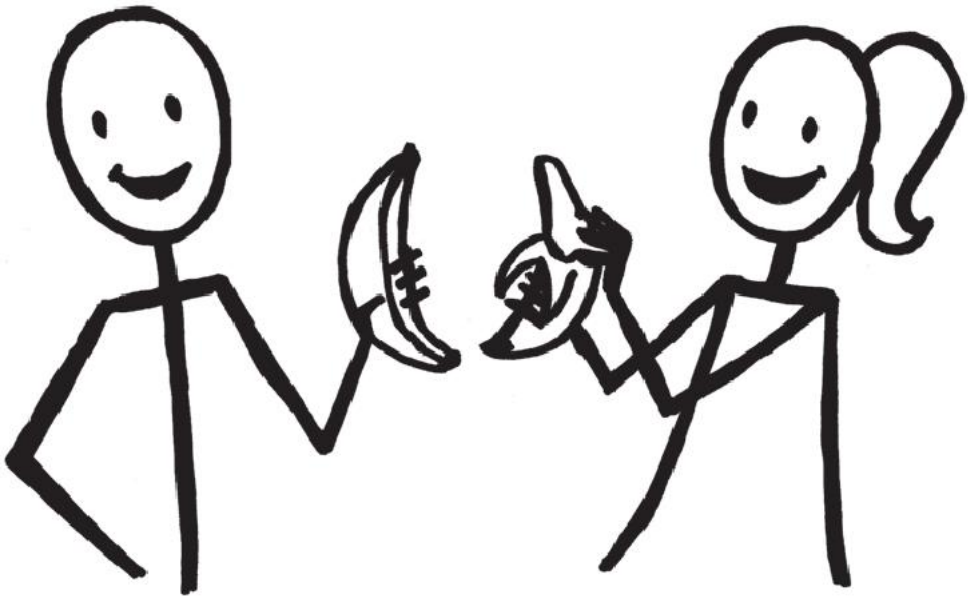
Distributive pronouns

These refer to one person or thing from two.
For example:

Either go now or stay at home.
Neither wants to go.

Or to a group of two or more.
For example:

Each has a banana.
I gave *each* an apple too.



Each has a banana.

21.1 Activities: pronouns

A

1. Students write down the definition of a pronoun. After checking the answers, a correct definition is written on the board. Individual mistakes are corrected.
2. Students are asked to say when the words 'those' and 'his' are *not* pronouns.
3. Sentences are read out and students raise their hands when they hear a pronoun. Some can also be written, for example:
   a. *They* went to a wedding.
   b. Tom wore his best outfit.
   c. *That* is my favourite, said Lucy.
   d. *Who* was the best man?

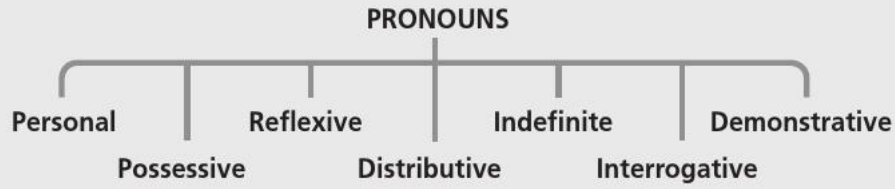
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e. That tall fellow *you* saw at the party.
f. *He* might be his brother.
g. Did *anyone* wear a hat?
h. Some did but *others* just had flowers in their hair.
i. *Someone* played the clarinet. *Everyone* said how well *she* played.
j. Did *you* take *them* a present? *Mine* will be late but *they* are still on their honeymoon.

4. Orally or in writing, students use the following words as pronouns and/or adjectives.

a. each	f. hers
b. neither	g. whose
c. theirs	h. one
d. those	i. that
e. yours	j. which

5. Students complete their flowchart for pronouns. Categories may be added to the chart as each is learnt. They then add an example below each one.



C

Checklist: pronouns

Students should now be able to:

- explain how a demonstrative pronoun such as 'this', could be used as an adjective instead
- correctly use the pronouns *who*, *whom* and *whose*
- follow indefinite and distributive pronouns with verbs in the correct number
- correct errors in the use of all of the above pronouns
- use all kinds of pronoun correctly in their own composition

Emphasis

22

Definition: The word emphasis comes via Latin from the Greek verb *emphainein* meaning 'to show', and in rhetoric 'to stress or lay significance'.

Using emphasis is, again, something which native English speakers do naturally; but understanding how we do this is an integral part of language education.

Languages convey meaning in different ways. English has developed a variety of techniques in the ways that we use our voices. Oral practice in using these techniques in vocal expression helps to develop listening and speech skills and to build self-confidence.

In English we convey emphasis by:

1. Changing the tone, pitch, stress and even rhythm in our voices. We often speak the word or words that we wish to emphasise more loudly or deliberately than the rest.
   For example:

   He actually *shot* the man!

   Most of us have been subject to a parental command – Come here – right *now*!
2. Another way we emphasise is by stressing an added part of the auxiliary verb 'to do'.
   For example:

   They *did* have a good time.

   I *do* like your dress.

3. We can also convey emphasis in the future tense by reversing the auxiliary forms 'will' and 'shall'. This emphasises the

usefulness of using 'shall' for the first person, and 'will' for second and third in the indicative (or statement) mood.
So, 'I shall do it' when emphatic becomes 'I *will* do it' and 'It will be done' when emphatic becomes 'It *shall* be done.'

A 22.1 Activities: emphasis

1. a. Students each write a given number of sentences each containing some form of emphasis and underline the stressed word or words.
   b. Students each, in turn, read out one of their sentences using their voices to convey the emphasis, for example:

      We were *so* sick on that boat.

2. The sentence 'Did you really do that?' is written on the board and students read it, emphasising each word in turn, for example:

   Did you really do that?
   Did *you* really do that? etc.

Mood

23

Definition: The word 'mood' comes from Latin *modus* and refers to the mode or manner in which an action is expressed.

Before studying mood, students should know about:

- the different kinds of sentences
- verb tenses for all kinds of statement apart from the conditional
- auxiliary verb forms

Many people have no idea what mood means and believe that it is an obscure, perhaps old-fashioned grammar term. In reality mood is a verb form, which, as the term implies, describes the mode or manner in which an action is spoken about, and it affects every sentence we utter.

In English there are just three moods. The first two, indicative and imperative, we have been practising from the beginning. The third, subjunctive is the worry as it is misunderstood and therefore confused, though in reality, it is straightforward and lends clarity and subtlety to our language.

The subjunctive mood causes confusion for several reasons, the first being the decline in grammar instruction in recent decades. The second is the process of attrition by which some finer points of language get lost over centuries. Thirdly, the remaining forms in some cases duplicate the indicative forms, so those subjunctive ones get overlooked or deemed unnecessary. But they are still with us and, without being pedantic, we owe it to our students and future generations to provide them with correct and empowering information about their own language. Colloquial speech does,

by definition, shy away from fastidiousness, but students should have the opportunity to learn the correct forms and use them in formal speech and writing.

Indicative mood

From Latin *indicativus* meaning 'stating', the indicative refers simply to statements such as those that form most of our speech and which we have studied earlier.
For example:

I *like* bananas.

Imperative mood

This word is from Latin *imperare* meaning 'to command'. Students are familiar with this kind of sentence.
For example:

Go and *buy* bananas.

Subjunctive or conditional mood

The word 'subjunctive', from Latin *subjunctivus*, means 'joined under' and in grammar this refers to the fact that it is often expressed in a joined, subsidiary clause (see page 170).

This mood expresses uncertainty, doubt or a wish – the 'maybe' situation. It is, in fact, much less complicated than in many other languages.

It is sometimes called the conditional mood from Latin *conditio* to discuss; in other words, the matter is as yet undecided. We form the subjunctive in several ways.

1. We use auxiliaries *may* or *might* with the bare infinitive.
   For example:

   We *may buy* some bananas.
   We *might have* them for dinner.

If, on the other hand, the outcome of the event has been decided, we use *might*.
For example:

If you had closed the gate the cows *might* not have got out.

2. The verb 'to be' features in the majority of subjunctive forms. In the present tense we use 'be' for all persons.
For example:

He suggested I *be* on the committee.
Be he live or *be* he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread ....

In the future we use 'were'.
For example:

If I *were* you, I *would* laugh.
If all the seas *were* one sea .....

But in the past we use 'had'.
For example:

Had I been there I *would have* laughed.

3. Sometimes the auxiliary is omitted (understood) especially in wishes.
For example:

So *be* it.
God *save* the Queen.

And in the negative:

Lest we forget.

Many a blessing or kind wish has been expressed in the subjunctive.
For example:

May the wind be always at your back. (Irish blessing)
Well may your lums [chimneys] reek [smoke].
(A Scottish Gaelic blessing for new brides – not Gaelic spelling)

A 23.1 Activities: mood

1. Students complete sentences orally around the class with the following beginnings:
   a. I wish . . . . . .
      For example: I wish I *were* (not was) at the show.
   b. I/he/she suggested . . . . . .
      For example: She suggested that he *stay* (not stays) at home.
   c. If this be the case . . . . . .
      For example: If this *be* (not is) the case, we should tell the police.
      Students write one of each type in their own grammar exercise books. Remember that each section should have a heading to aid revision.
2. Students are given verbs with which to form sentences in each mood, for example:

   Wear –

Indicative:	He is wearing his best shoes.
Imperative:	Don't wear your best shoes in the paddock.
Subjunctive:	I suggested he wear his farm boots.

3. Students compose their own blessings or sayings using the subjunctive mood. For homework, they could see if they can discover any more from popular or classical literature.

C Checklist: mood

Students should now be able to:

- explain the term 'mood' and state the three forms in English.
- explain the function of the indicative and imperative moods with examples.
- explain the terms 'subjunctive' and 'conditional'
- discuss the argument for retaining these forms in our language

- give examples of the subjunctive mood
  - using the verb 'to be'
  - using *may* and *might*
  - expressing doubt, wish or intention
- correctly form sentences in indicative, imperative or subjunctive mood
- correctly form sentences indicating doubt, wish or intention

C

24 Case

Case is the term for a system of categorising nouns or pronouns according to their function in a sentence or clause. The system is very simple and provides clarity and a means of revising, as well as the important function of enabling better understanding of certain foreign languages.

Simply, the part that a noun or pronoun plays in a sentence gives it its case.

Nominative

The subject of a verb is in the nominative case, for example:

The taxi is here.
We are going to the theatre.

Accusative

The direct object of a verb is in the accusative case, for example:

Have you got *the tickets*?
The ball hit *me* on the *head*.

Dative

The indirect object of a verb is in the dative case, for example:

Pay *the driver* a tip.
Give *her* the umbrella.

Genitive

The genitive case refers to someone, or something, that possesses something, for example:

This *theatre's* acoustics are superb.

Vocative

The vocative case refers to the words by which you address persons or things, for example:

Hurry, *girls*, the play is about to start.

24.1 Activities: case

A

1. Students identify the case of each of the nouns or pronouns in the following sentences.
   a. Dad sings in the shower.
   b. Rory sat on a green mat.
   c. Driver, please stop at the entrance.
   d. Lucy's sister has asthma.
   e. Give the principal this note, Cassie.
2. Students write two sentences for each of the following words, using a different case for each, for example:

   elephant: My uncle has an elephant's tusk. (genitive)
   Elephants are reputed to have long memories. (nominative)

   a. explosion
   b. Queen Victoria
   c. algebra
   d. speaker
   e. love

C

Checklist: case

Students should now be able to:

- define the term 'case'
- name the five cases which are applicable in English
- give the function of each
- state the case of any noun or pronoun in a given sentence
- suggest a reason why understanding case can be useful

Phrases

25

Definition: The word 'phrase' comes, via Latin, from the Greek *phrazein* meaning 'to tell'. A phrase provides additional information to a statement. It is a group of words without a finite verb which forms a grammatical unit that can do the work of an adjective, an adverb or a noun (or pronoun, less commonly).

Before studying phrases, students should be able to:

- recognise and understand the function of all eight parts of speech
- understand the formation of the present and past participles (participles, especially the present participle are common in phrases)

Phrases and clauses are both word groups which, with the exception of noun phrases and clauses, act as appendages to one or another word in a simple sentence. They both have the function of expanding information but they differ in construction, so we deal with them separately, beginning with phrases, which are simpler, but enjoyable to work with.

Note that some modern grammar texts allow the application of the term 'phrase' to any group of two or more words – or even one word – as in *Glass* is breakable/*The glass* is breakable. This use of the word 'phrase' is not only totally confusing, as the words marked already have defining terminology, but also renders not only the function but the category and the word 'phrase' itself as quite meaningless.

In the traditional sense, being an appendage, an adjectival or an adverbial phrase can be removed from a sentence, leaving the remainder grammatically whole. Thus it possesses a clear and valuable function.

Adjectival phrases

This is a group of words forming a unit and doing the work of an adjective. Therefore, it tells more about a noun or pronoun.
For example:

Today I saw a man with a glass eye.

adjectival phrase qualifying
the noun 'man'

Somebody wearing army boots robbed the bank.

adjectival phrase qualifying
the pronoun 'somebody'

You can remove the phrase and the remainder is still a complete sentence.



A man wearing army boots robbed the bank.

Adverbial phrases

As the name suggests these phrases give more information about the action of the verb. They modify verbs in just the same way that single adverbs do. And, just like adverbs, they give answers to the questions: When? – time; Where? – place; How? – manner; Why? – reason etc.
For example – adverbial phrases modifying the verb 'caught':

Jack caught a huge fish *just before sunset*. [time]
Jack caught a huge fish *in the causeway*. [place]
Jack caught a huge fish *with his new rod*. [manner]
Jack caught a huge fish *to have for supper*. [reason]

Adjectival and adverbial phrases, like single adjectives and adverbs, must be placed as closely as possible to the words that they qualify or modify, otherwise they may give quite the wrong meaning.
For example:

The fishermen sold us a huge crab with a long beard.
or The fisherman with a long beard sold us a huge crab.

Noun phrases

These have the function of nouns so they can also be objects, subjects or complements. For this reason, unlike adjectival and adverbial phrases, they form a necessary part of the sentence.
For example:

Fishing in the causeway is my favourite hobby.
noun phrase as subject

I love *fishing in the causeway*.
noun phrase as object

My Dad's work is *fishing in the sea*.

noun phrase as complement

25.1 Activities: phrases

A

1. Students complete sentences by matching each part to a fitting noun phrase. They underline each noun phrase and note whether it is a subject or object.

a. lifting weights	how to ride a skateboard
b. retired sailors like	not to go alone
c. David will show you	grandma taught me
d. a state of emergency	living by the sea
e. is prohibited	can be very messy
f. to tell the truth	strengthens your muscles
g. eating spaghetti	the president declared
h. what to wear	laughing at his jokes
i. made our stomachs ache	please let us know
j. I told you	spitting in the bus

2. Students write sentences using each of the following phrases in two ways, as a noun, an adjective or an adverb. They underline the phrase and indicate its kind, for example:

   teasing dogs –
   <u>Teasing dogs</u> is very dangerous
   Noun – subject

   a. with a sharp knife
   b. wearing a mask
   c. over the fence
   d. in the street
   e. to save money

3. A simple sentence is written on the board. Students either take turns to add an adjectival phrase orally, or write one in their books to be read out. Remember – no finite verbs! For example:

A man got on the bus.

1st student – A man with tattoos and dreadlocks got on the bus.

2nd student – A man wearing a false beard …

3rd student – A man got on the bus waiting at the traffic lights.

4. Students are given nouns to qualify with adjectival phrases.
   a. the lantern
   b. his toe
   c. my socks
   d. a taxi
   e. an elephant
5. Students are given a sheet of paper printed with cartoons of people, objects, animals or scenes. Swipe Art from the computer can be used. The students write a sentence for each picture, describing it and including an adjectival phrase. They underline the phrase, for example:

   In the supermarket I saw a man with a big nose.

6. As well as the activities described below, all of those for adjectival phrases can be used to identify adverbial phrases *modifying verbs*. Students underline the phrase and indicate with an arrow the verb that it modifies, for example:
   a. They heard this strange knocking all through the night.
   b. Dad found a real opal down by the river.
   c. With a toss of her head she marched out.
   d. Dad jumped over the fence, just in time.
   e. I wouldn't do that for a hundred quid.

   Students are asked if they can find a sentence in those above, which contains more than one phrase.

A

7. Students draw four boxes, labelled as shown. They enter each of the phrases given, in its appropriate box. They must remember to ask themselves the questions when, where, why or how?
   a. with a sharp cry
   b. far too late
   c. in a loud voice
   d. before sunrise
   e. through carelessness
   f. under the bed
   g. to escape from prison
   h. in the rainwater tank
   i. for my aunt
   j. with a stiff brush

Time (when?)	**Place (where?)**
Manner (how?)	**Reason (why?)**

8. Students rewrite the following sentences correctly.
   a. The man failed to see the approaching horse doing up his shoelace.
   b. The girl ran away from the fierce dog wearing high heels.
   c. I saw this huge skeleton wandering around the museum.
   d. We were told that it is rare to see wombats at school.
   e. The old plough was remodelled by the farmer found in the dump.
   f. The criminal was found dead after a trip overseas in his own bed.

   Remember to use commas appropriately.
9. We can improve our writing by joining sentences together, using phrases, for example:

   The boy ran into a lamp post. He wasn't looking where he was going.

A

Not looking where he was going, the boy ran into the lamp post.

a. The farmer started digging up his paddock. He had heard that there were dinosaur bones in the area.
b. Two men smashed into the video store yesterday. They used a hammer to break the glass.
c. Michael spent the last of his pocket money. He bought a blue vase. It was for his mother.
d. This elephant charged. He came towards us. His tusks were really long.
e. The workers got very sunburnt. They were stripped to the waist.

10. Students complete orally or in writing the following sentences, for example:

    I really like (walking in the rain).
    I try to avoid (being late for dinner).

    a. I really like . . . . . .
    b. I try to avoid . . . . . .

11. Students change around and rewrite one of each of the above, so that the noun phrase comes at the beginning of each sentence.

Checklist: phrases

C

Students should now be able to:

- recognise and mark phrases in a passage
- distinguish between the three kinds of phrases
- use phrases correctly and without ambiguity in their own writing
- label sentences containing phrases and indicate which words they qualify or modify

26 Clauses

Definition: The word 'clause' is from the Latin *clausa* meaning 'a closing' – in the sense that the clause is complete in form and meaning. A simple sentence with one finite verb is referred to as the main (or principal) clause and the appended or attached clauses are referred to as subordinate clauses.

Before studying clauses, students should:

- understand and recognise the difference between finite and non-finite verbs
- know the functions of nouns, adjectives and adverbs
- understand the terms subject, object and complement
- be able to define the term 'phrase' and understand its functions
- recognise and understand the function of relative pronouns

Once students have mastered the use of phrases they are well on the way to understanding clauses. Clauses are used in the same three ways: as nouns, being subjects, objects or complements; as adjectives, qualifying nouns; and as adverbs modifying verbs.

It is important to identify for students the essential differences between phrases and clauses.

A finite verb

A clause always contains a finite verb.
For example:

The old lady, carrying a newborn lamb, entered the kitchen.
non-finite verb (phrase)

The old lady, who was carrying a newborn lamb, entered the kitchen.

finite verb (clause)

A finite verb has a subject. The subject in the above clause is expressed by the pronoun 'who', referring to the old lady.

A connecting word

Unlike phrases, clauses almost always need a connecting word. It is occasionally omitted in casual speech, as understood. Adjectival clauses are connected to the nouns they qualify by relative pronouns (see page 164).
For example:

This is the hat *that (or which)* I bought at the market.

Adverbial clauses are connected to the verbs they modify, by a subordinating conjunction.
For example:

I bought it *because* I am going to a wedding.

Noun clauses are connected by relative pronouns *or* subordinating conjunctions.
For example:

My cousin told me *what* I should wear.

relative pronoun:

My cousin asked me *when* I would arrive.

conjunction

Whereas most of these connectors come naturally to native English speakers, they can be more tricky for foreigners learning English. It is important for students to understand the function of relative pronouns before they practise clauses.

Much jargon surrounds the terminology for all of these categories. As mentioned earlier, it is wise to use easily recognisable but definitive terms, usually of the more traditional kind which are readily understood in any language or reference material. It is equally important to be consistent in their use.

Main clauses

The main (another common term is 'principal') clause consists of a simple sentence with one finite verb. It makes complete sense.
For example:

A bee stung the woman.
finite verb

Compound sentences

There can be more than one main clause in a sentence. If the clauses have the same grammatical form and are joined by a conjunction such as *and*, *or* or *but* they form a compound sentence.
For example:

A bee *stung* the woman and she *dropped* her spade.
finite verb — finite verb

Each clause makes sense on its own. The conjunction may be only understood, in which case a semicolon is used to join the main clauses.
For example:

A bee stung the woman; she dropped her spade.

Sentence analysis

Finite verbs:	stung, dropped
Main clause 1:	a bee stung the woman



A bee stung the woman and she dropped her spade.

Conjunction: and
Main clause 2: she dropped her spade
Compound sentence

Subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses also contain a finite verb but they do not make sense on their own. They are dependent on the main clause for their meaning, but they *add* meaning to the main clause.

There are three kinds of subordinate clauses:

- adjectival (doing the work of an adjective)
- adverbial (doing the work of an adverb)
- noun (doing the work of a noun)

They are joined to the main clause by linking words:

- adjectival clauses are linked with relative pronouns
- adverbial clauses are linked with subordinating conjunctions

Sentence types

1. Simple sentence – contains one main clause
2. Compound sentence – contains two or more main clauses
3. Complex sentence – contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses
4. Compound complex – contains more than one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses

Adjectival clauses and relative pronouns

We use relative pronouns to refer to a noun or pronoun already mentioned in the main clause, or in another subordinate clause of the same sentence. They form the subject or object of an adjectival clause, often introducing it. Thus, they join the two clauses, being two pieces of information about the same person or thing.

Relative pronouns are the same in singular and plural but they differ according to function.

1. For the subject of a clause, we use *who* for people, and *which* or *that* for things, for example:

   He is the boy *who* delivers our paper.
   This is the paper *that* he brings.

2. For the object of a clause, we use *whom* for people, and *which* or *that* for things, for example:

   He is the boy *whom* you met in the shop.

   (In conversation we sometimes omit this relative pronoun, as it is said to be understood).

   He was wearing the jacket (*that)* I gave him.

3. For possession we use *whose* for people, and *which* or *that* for things, for example:

   He is the boy *whose* Dad plays in the band.
   It is the band *of which* I have all those albums.

   In conversation we usually turn these sentences around to sound more natural.

4. As prepositions take an object, so, following a preposition, we use the objective form (in 2 above) of the relative pronoun, such as *for whom* (or *which*), *by whom*, *to whom* etc., for example:

   To whom did you give those tickets?

5. Sometimes, we use conjunctions as relative pronouns – probably to invest the statement with a little extra meaning, yet in a contracted form, for example:

   This is the town *where* (in which) the film was shot.
   Friday was the day *when* (at which time) the crime was committed.

6. We can give emphasis to relative pronouns by adding 'so ever'.

   Whosoever believes in me shall have everlasting life.
   You can give that away to *whomsoever* you like.

Analysing a sentence containing an adjectival clause

This is the woman who was stung by a bee.

Finite verbs: is, was stung
Main clause: This is the woman
Relative pronoun (link): who
Subordinate clause: who was stung by a bee
Complex sentence
The relative pronoun is *included* in the subordinate clause, as it is the subject of its verb.

26.1 Activities: adjectival clauses and relative pronouns

A

1. Students bracket the relative pronoun and underline the adjectival clause in each of the following sentences, for example:

   Tomorrow I will ride my new BMX [that] I got for my birthday.

   a. This competition, which is held twice a year, is for Under 12's.
   b. The trainer, who is my friend's dad, was a champion.

A

c. The boys whom he is training now could be champions too.
d. My dad prefers tennis, which he still plays.
e. The farmer whose land we use often gives us apples.

2. Students add adjectival clauses to each of the following.
   a. I bought a new guitar yesterday at our music store.
   b. My sister plays a trumpet.
   c. We have a music room to practise in.
   d. We shall both play in the concert.
   e. I have a new dress for the party.
3. Students add three adjectival clauses to the following sentence, each introduced with a different relative pronoun: who, which, whose, whom, that.

   Gillian was sitting in the front row.

4. Students join the two sentences to make one, by using an adjectival clause.
   a. The headmaster was angry. He glared at us over his spectacles.
   b. He had seen us go down to the river. The river was out of bounds.
   c. Benny started to cry. His father is very strict.
   d. Mr Prophet said he was especially angry with Jack. He had given him detention last week.
   e. I apologised about our bad behaviour. It was not very responsible.
5. Students analyse the following sentences, after they have written one up on the board, using the format shown in the examples on pages 162–3, 165.
   a. We had a team of oxen that pulled the load of produce to the market.
   b. My mother, who milked the cows, made butter and cheese.
   c. This is the old churn that she used for making butter.
   d. My father, whose horses are very old now, still rides occasionally.
   e. That is the horse which used to win the races.

Checklist: adjectival clauses and relative pronouns

C

Students should now be able to:

- list the relative pronouns used to join adjectival clauses to nouns
- recognise and mark adjectival clauses in sentences or passages
- use relative pronouns correctly to form their own adjectival clauses

Adverbial clauses

There are more kinds of adverbial clauses than there are adverbial phrases, as their construction enables us to convey a greater variety of meaning. Although the kinds of clauses can often be recognised by the conjunction, such as *if* or *because*, used to join it to the rest of the sentence, this can be misleading and should not be relied on. Instead, we classify them by asking ourselves what kind of information the clause is intended to convey – what messages does the person being addressed get from the information?

By substituting the following suggested phrases, you can determine the type of adverbial clause being used.

Clause type	**Phrase**
Time	at the time that
Place	at the place that
Reason	because/for the reason that
Manner	in the way that
Condition	on the condition that
Result	as a result
Purpose	in order that
Concession	in spite of the fact that
Comparison	(more) than

The word 'as' can make things tricky as it may introduce any of the following clauses:

- My uncle arrived home *as we were putting the tools away*. [adverbial clause of time]
- We were tired *as we had worked hard all afternoon*. [adverbial clause of reason]
- The shed was *as clean as a whistle*. [adverbial clause of comparison]
- Uncle Andy laid tea on the patio *as he had been shown*. [adverbial clause of manner]

Below are examples of each kind of adverbial clause that can be used for both instruction and exercise. It is wise to teach only two or three kinds at a time, to avoid confusion.

Adverbial clause of time

This clause tells you more about the time that something happens.

My aunt jumped when she saw the spider.
at the time that

Finite verbs: jumped, saw
Main clause: My Aunt jumped
Conjunction (link): when
Subordinate clause: she saw the spider
Adverbial clause of *time*, modifying the verb 'jumped' in the main clause.
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of place

This clause tells you more about where something happens.

She swept the shed where the spiders were building webs.
in the place that

Finite verbs: swept, were building
Main clause: she swept the shed
Conjunction: where
Subordinate clause: the spiders were building webs
Adverbial clause of *place*, modifying the verb 'swept' in the main clause.
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of reason

This clause tells why something is done, or happens.

Bella screamed because a spider dropped on her arm.
for the reason that

Finite verbs: screamed, dropped
Main clause: Bella screamed
Conjunction: because
Subordinate clause: a spider dropped on her arm
Adverbial clause of *reason*, modifying the verb 'screamed' in the main clause.
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of manner

This clause tells you more about the way in which something is done.

I cleaned out the tool cupboard as she had shown me.
in the way that

Finite verbs: cleaned out, had shown
Main clause: I cleaned out the tool cupboard

Conjunction: as
Subordinate clause: she had shown me
Adverbial clause of *manner*, modifying the verb 'cleaned out' in the main clause.
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of condition

Discuss the meaning of the word 'condition'. This clause tells us something that may happen under certain conditions. Note also the use of the subjunctive mood.

You would need to go to hospital if you were bitten by a venomous spider.

in the case that

Finite verbs: would need, were bitten
Main clause: you would need to go to hospital
Conjunction: if
Subordinate clause: you were bitten by a venomous spider
Adverbial clause of *condition*, modifying the verb 'would need' in the main clause
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of result

This clause tells us something which happened as a result of another happening.

My sister likes insects, so she reads about them in the encyclopedia.

as a result

Finite verbs: likes, reads
Main clause: my sister likes insects



My sister likes insects so she reads about them in the encyclopedia.

Conjunction: so
Subordinate clause: she reads about them in the encyclopedia
Adverbial clause of *result*, modifying the verb 'likes' in the main clause
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of purpose

This clause tells us why something is done.

She is working hard so that she can become an entomologist.
|
for the purpose that

Finite verbs: is working, can become
Main clause: she is working hard
Conjunction: so that
Subordinate clause: she can become an entomologist

Adverbial clause of *purpose*, modifying the verb 'is working' in the main clause
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of concession

This clause tells you that something happened in spite of another occurrence.

Although I like insects I do not wish to study entomology.
|
in spite of the fact that

Finite verbs: like, do wish
Main clause: I do not wish to study entomology
Conjunction: although
Subordinate clause: I like insects
Adverbial clause of *concession* modifying the verb 'do (not) wish' in the main clause
Complex sentence

Adverbial clause of comparison

This clause describes how something compares with something else.

That spider was more colourful than the others in the shed (were).
|
compared with

Finite verb: was, (were)
Main clause: That spider was more colourful
Subordinate clause: than the others in the shed (were)

Adverbial clause of *comparison* modifying the verb 'was' in the main clause
Complex sentence

In adverbial clauses of comparison, the verb is often omitted, as it is understood, so the above sentence makes sense even with the omission of the word 'were'. However, we show that it is understood.

26.2 Activities: adverbial clauses

A

1. Students bracket the conjunctions and underline the adverbial clauses in the sentences provided, and state what kind of clause each is, for example:

   We were fishing [where] the smugglers used to land.
   Adverbial clause of *place*

   a. We had to rush home as a storm was breaking.
   b. We wanted to get back before it got dark.
   c. We had caught a fish as big as the one Dad caught last Sunday.
   d. My brother is only little, so I carried his bucket for him.
   e. We cleaned the fish quickly so that we could grill it for dinner.

2. A simple sentence is written on the board, and students in turn add an adverbial clause and state what kind they have used. One or two may also be done in writing, for example:

   Dad went shopping … because he needed new golf balls.
   Adverbial clause of *reason*

   a. Cathy laid the table.
   b. Lock the door.
   c. I caught the bus.
   d. Luke was angry.
   e. We had a lot of fun.

C Checklist: adverbial clauses

Students should now be able to:

- explain the difference between a phrase and a clause
- mark the adverbial clauses in sentences or a given passage
- add adverbial clauses to simple sentences
- name the kind of clause being used
- analyse a complex sentence containing an adverbial clause using a structure and format

Noun clause

Noun clauses are not difficult to recognise once they are seen as a unit performing the same function as a noun. As such, they form the subject, object or complement of a verb.

It is clear from the following examples that a noun clause is usually introduced by either a conjunction or a relative pronoun, so as with the other kinds of clause, ask yourself what function it is performing in the sentence.

For example:

- as the subject:

  Where he hid the money is still a mystery.

- as the object of a verb:

  They now know *who the thief was*.

- as the object of a preposition:

  He will be punished for *what he has done*.

- as the complement:

  This was *how it was done*.

26.3 Activities: clauses

A

(Identifying is a process of logical thinking.)

1. Students identify noun clauses in a passage, for example:

   Three men were seen in the car park after dark. *Who they were* (s) was impossible to tell. We wonder *what they were up to* (o). *That they were up to no good* (s) was obvious, as they were wearing dark clothing with balaclavas over their heads. We called the police, but we didn't know *how long they would take to get here* (o). We didn't know *what to do* (o), so, shaking with fear, we hid behind a car that was parked nearby. We were relieved when they arrived. That is *exactly what happened*. (compl.)

2. Students list any other clauses they can find in the passage and state what kind they are, for example:
   a. as they were wearing dark clothing … [adverbial clause of reason (modifying the verb 'was')]
   b. so we hid behind a car …. [adverbial clause of result (modifying the verb 'know')]
   c. that was parked nearby … [adjectival clause (qualifying the noun 'car')]
   d. when they arrived …. [adverbial clause of time (modifying the verb 'were relieved')]
3. Students select all, or a stated number, of phrases from the passage, for example:

Adverbial:	in the car park (place)
	after dark (time)
	over their heads (place)
	behind a car (place)
Adjectival:	with balaclavas … qualifying (clothing)
	shaking with fear … qualifying (we)
	parked nearby … qualifying (car)
Noun:	what to do (object)

A

4. Students write their own short story including clauses or phrases as suggested. These should be identified. The clauses or phrases may come in any order and additional ones other than those specified may be included, for example:
   a. two adverbial clauses and an adverbial phrase
   b. one adjectival clause and one noun phrase
   c. a noun clause and an adverbial clause
   d. one noun clause, one adjectival clause and an adjectival phrase
   e. one adjectival clause, one noun clause and one adverbial phrase

C

Checklist: clauses

Students should now be able to

- define the term 'clause'
- differentiate between phrases and clauses
- identify clauses in written material and state the kind of each – adverbial, adjectival, noun
- identify the function of specific noun clauses, i.e. subject, object, complement
- add specific kinds of clause to simple sentences
- use clauses of all kinds correctly in their own composition

Clause analysis

27

Analysing sentences is an exercise that was often made tedious by overload. Students were given hours of laborious work analysing highly complicated sentences concerning the most boring subject matter.

It is important for students to practise some analysis in order to reinforce and demonstrate their understanding of sentence components and structure. It develops an awareness of syntax variations and is also an exercise in logical thinking. It may be presented as a form of puzzle.

There are several ways to format the analysis of sentences. The simplest way is that shown for various kinds of clauses (see pages 162–3, 165, 168–173). Other methods include the mapping of flowcharts and the diagram of a tree.

Students learn and memorise in different ways, so after you have demonstrated all three ways, they may prefer to choose their own method for analysis.

Analysis formats are shown on pages 178–183. Students can draw up their own charts or be supplied with printed blanks. Both beginner and advanced examples are shown.

It is always helpful to locate the finite verbs first, then mark off the components of the sentence, using brackets, round and square and underlining, before filling in the charts.

Time and space will be saved at this stage by using abbreviations (see page 96).

Format 1 – clause analysis chart

Analysis of a compound sentence

George *checked* his protective clothing and *set out* towards the summit.

Finite verbs: checked, set out
Main clause 1: George checked his protective clothing
Conjunction: and
Main clause 2: (George) set out towards the summit
Compound sentence

Analysis of a complex sentence

George *checked* his protective clothing before he *set out* towards the summit.

Finite verbs: checked, set out
Main clause: George checked his protective clothing
Conjunction: before
Subordinate clause: he set out towards the summit
Adverbial clause of time modifying the verb 'checked' in the main clause
Complex sentence

Analysis of a compound–complex sentence

George, who *was* an experienced mountaineer, *checked* his protective clothing and *counted* his supplies before he *set out* towards the summit.

Finite verbs: was, checked, counted, set out
Main clause 1: George checked his protective clothing
Conjunction: and
Main clause 2: (George) counted his supplies
Relative pronoun: who

Subordinate clause 1: who was an experienced mountaineer
Adjectival clause qualifying the noun George in main clause 1
Conjunction: before
Subordinate clause 2: he set out towards the summit
Adverbial clause modifying the verbs 'checked' in main clause 1 and 'counted' in main clause 2
Compound–complex sentence

Format 2 – clause analysis table

With this kind of analysis, the number of columns may be varied according to the degree of difficulty being practised.

Beginner 1

Sentence: The zoo was closed because a large lion had escaped.

Finite verbs	Main clause	Link	Subordinate clause
was closed	The zoo was closed	because	a large lion had escaped Adverbial clause of reason modifying the verb 'was closed' in the main clause

Complex sentence

Beginner 2

Sentence: The zoo was closed for three days, because a large lion, which had been flown from Africa, had escaped.

Finite verbs	Main clause	Link	Subordinate clause	Phrase
was closed had escaped had been flown	A. The zoo was closed	because which	1. a large lion had escaped Adverbial clause of reason modifying the verb 'was closed' in the main clause 2. had been flown from Africa Adjectival clause qualifying the noun 'lion' in subordinate clause 1	For three days Adverbial phrase of time from Africa Adverbial phrase of place

Complex sentence

Advanced 1

Sentence: George, who was an experienced climber, checked his protective clothing and counted his supplies before he set out on his challenging climb towards the summit.

Finite verb	Main clause	Link	Subordinate clause	Phrase
was checked counted set out	A. George checked his protective clothing B. counted his supplies	who and before	1. who was an experienced climber Adjectival clause 1 qualifying the noun 'George' in main clause A 2. he set out on his challenging climb Adverbial clause of time Modifying the verbs 'checked' in main clause A and 'counted' in main clause B	 towards the summit Adverbial phrase of place

Compound–complex sentence

Advanced 2

Sentence: When he paused for a brief rest, where the ground was less steep, George noticed a mark
previous climber had planted beside a large boulder and he knew, without a doubt, that he was on th

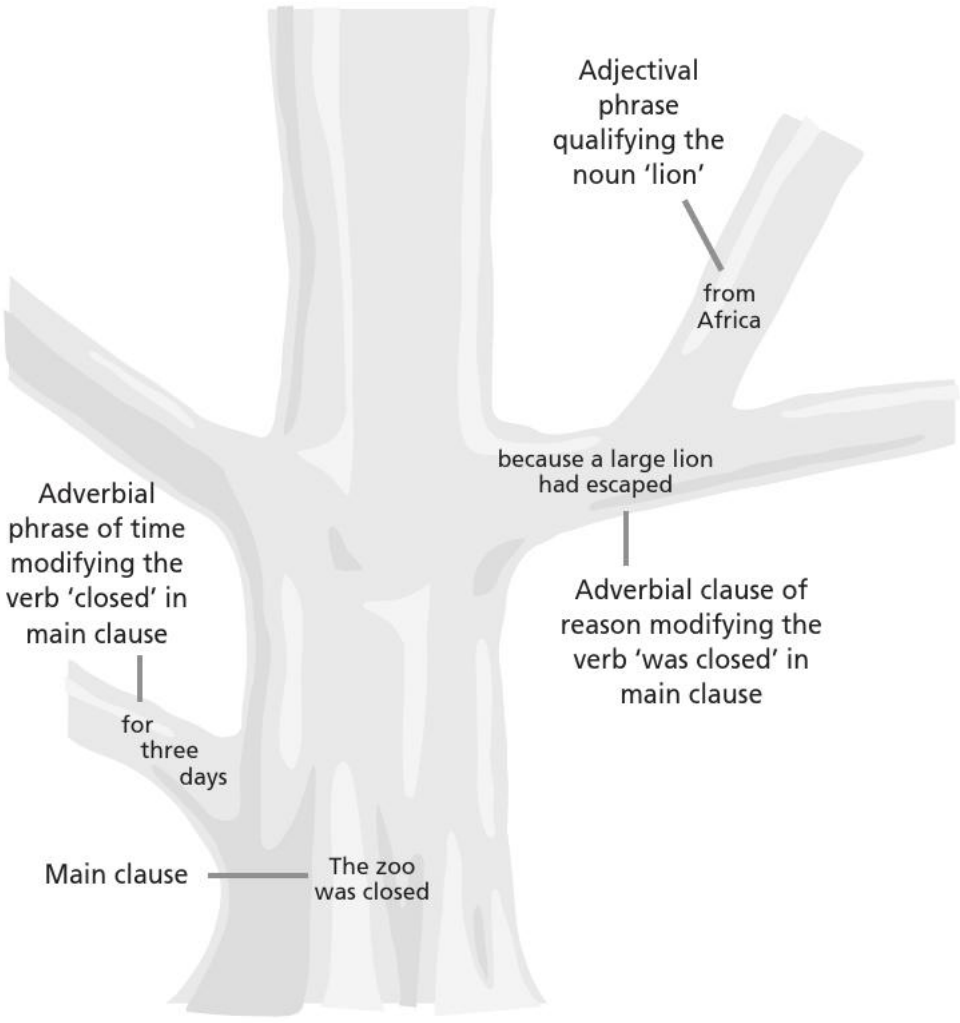
Finite verb	Main clause	Link	Subordinate clause	Phrase
paused noticed	A. George noticed a marker	When (conjunction)	1. he paused Adverbial clause of time modifying the verb 'noticed' in main clause A	I. for a brief rest Adverbial phrase of reason modifying the verb 'paused' in S
was		where (conjunction)	2. the ground was less steep Adverbial clause of place modifying the verb 'paused' in Subordinate clause 1	II. beside a large boulder Adverbial phrase of place modif 'planted' in Sub clause 3
had planted		which	3. which the previous climber had planted Adjectival clause qualifying the noun 'marker' in main clause A	
knew was	B. he knew	and that	4. he was on the right track noun clause object of the verb 'knew' in main clause B	III. without a doubt Adverbial phrase of manner modifying the verb 'knew' in ma

Compound–complex sentence

Format 3 – clause analysis tree

Beginner

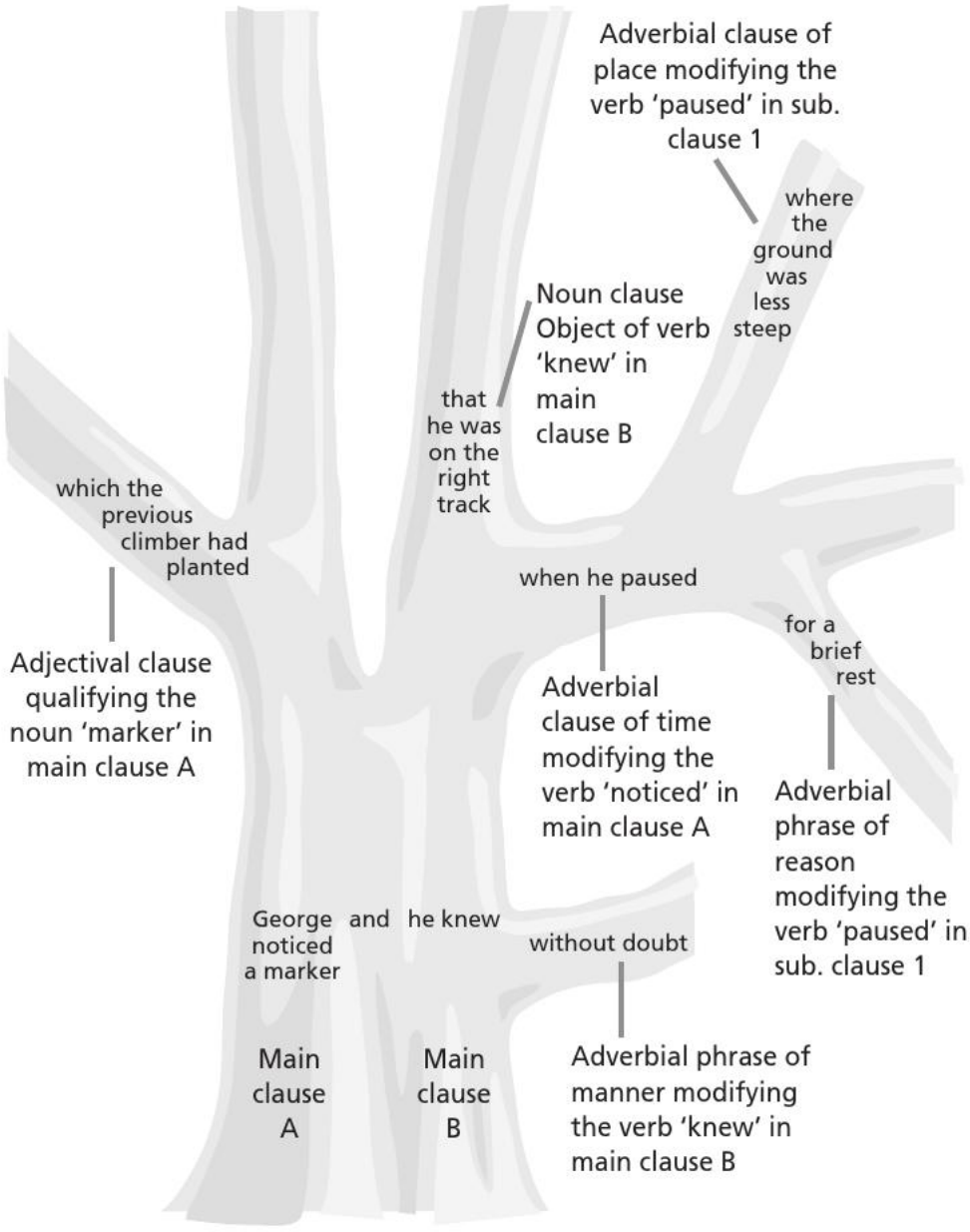
Sentence: The zoo was closed for three days, because a large lion from Africa had escaped.



Complex sentence

Advanced

Sentence: When he paused for a brief rest, where the ground was less steep, George noticed a marker which the previous climber had planted beside a large boulder and he knew, without a doubt, that he was on the right track.

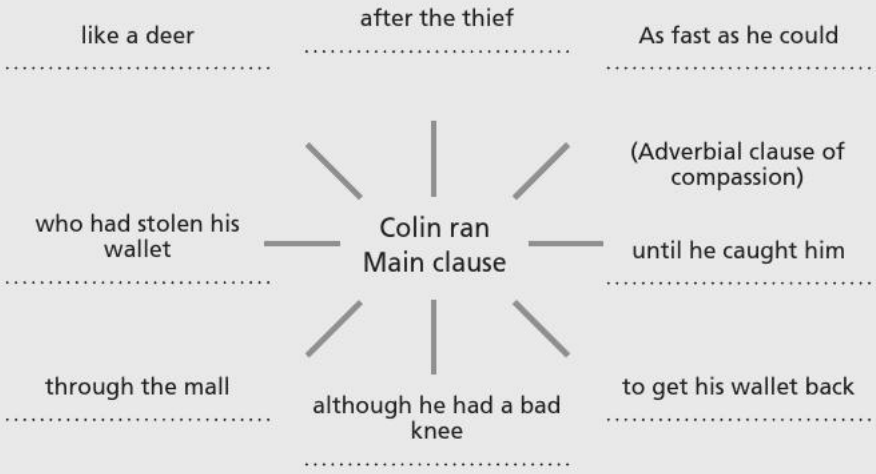


Compound–complex sentence

27.1 Activities: clause analysis

A

1. Students write sentences containing the following:
   a. one main clause only
   b. one main clause and two subordinate clauses
   c. two main clauses and two subordinate clauses
   d. one main clause, one adverbial clause and one adverbial phrase
   e. one main clause, one subordinate clause, one adjectival phrase and one adverbial phrase
2. Students are given a main clause surrounded by possible additions. They fill in the dotted lines below each, naming its function, such as adjectival phrase, noun clause etc.



Sentences for analysis – beginner

a. The crocodile lunged, as the tourist bent down to take a photograph.
b. We tied balloons that the girls had blown up to the gate post.
c. Dad was furious when we lost his spanner and he threatened to punish us.
d. I hope you will give us a hand to cook lamingtons for the party.
e. Although the star of the show fell sick, her understudy played the part really well.

f. The show was as good as it was last year so we plan to go again next year.
g. If you tell a lie you can be sure that the truth will find you out.
h. The food that we had accidentally left in the fridge was so smelly that even the dog would not eat it.
i. Tie the ends as I showed you and then it will not come undone.

Sentences for analysis – advanced

a. I don't know why you feel so guilty about a crime you did not commit.
b. Ride as well as you can, because if you win I shall pay for you to have lessons.
c. All through the night the drums sounded, warning the nearby tribes that they were preparing for battle.
d. Although it was dark, we struggled on until we found the spot where Taffy had spent that night, which had turned out to be his last.
e. Davy knew that the old man would bring the map showing the site where the whisky barrels had been rolled up the beach by the smugglers, whom he was now hoping to catch.
f. We ducked behind the building as we saw the horse, which had been startled by the explosion, gallop up the street towards us.
g. The boss was so angry because he told me to pull the lever and I pulled the wrong one, so all the machinery, which had been switched on only ten minutes earlier, came to a grinding halt.
h. Tell me how we can persuade the mayor to change the by-laws that have prevented us from parking near the town hall, even if we are delivering goods.
i. The elephant lurched into the circus ring which was surrounded by spectators and, while we watched in disbelief, he picked up the clown and tossed him high into the air, whence he landed on a strategically placed trampoline.
j. Although demand had increased, the service reduced its overtime hours, because it felt that the efficient practices now in place were benefiting the community which had previously been complaining about the harm to family life.

A

3. *Clauses game*

A large supply of cards is prepared, approximately 60 per six students. Students can share in preparing these. More cards will make the game more fun.

a. Sentences are provided or constructed with the help of the students. The sentences should not be connected, but each should include:

a subject consisting of one or more words, for example: My grandad

a verb: dropped

an object (if applicable): a pile of plates

a clause: when he was helping Grandma

a phrase: in the kitchen

interjections/conjunctions: and, or, but etc

b. The cards are allocated evenly, and each has the name of a sentence part written at the top. It is a good idea to use a different coloured pen for each sentence part.

c. The part of a chosen sentence (each one is done separately) that matches the name of the sentence part is written below.

d. Scores are allocated in order of difficulty, for example: Interjection/Conjunction 1, subject/object 2, verb 3, phrase 4, clause 5

Example of card

PHRASE (Adv. Place)

In the kitchen

4

e. When the game is finished, the cards are shuffled into a pack.

Play

Cards are dealt until each student has seven. The remaining pack is laid face down on the table, with one card upturned beside it.

A

Aim

Students each try to form a sentence (it must be grammatical, but it can be nonsense!) by putting together any of the components in their hands. Once a player has formed a sentence with at least three cards, he/she may, before their turn, lay the sentence down on the table where others can see it.

Each player in turn picks up one card from the pack, and discards one card from his hand, which he puts on the pile facing upwards.

A player may take the card on the top of the facing up pile if he wants it. If he now has a complete sentence, he must wait for his next turn before laying it down.

Players may add a card to another's sentence in order to deplete his own hand, but he should do this only after he has laid down at least one sentence of his own.

The game ends when one player has got rid of all his cards.

Scoring

All players add up the numbers printed on the cards they have laid down. This is their plus score. They must then *deduct* the total of the numbers of those cards left in their hand. The winner is the player with the highest score.

More cards may be added and divided into adjectival or adverbial phrases or clauses with the category printed on each card. This activity provides reinforcement.

Checklist: clause analysis

C

Students should now be able to:

- write all forms of sentence (simple, compound, complex and compound–complex) grammatically and fluently
- name kinds of clauses
- form clauses of given categories and add to simple sentences
- analyse sentences correctly using one of the formats given

28 Word building

It is both interesting and important to give children of any age an idea about where words have come from, and we can do this at any time without reference to the grammatical construction of a word.

When discussing words in relation to spelling and/or comprehension, however, students need to be sure of:

- the functions of all parts of speech
- the use of a dictionary for finding out word constructions

Students will become increasingly familiar with the meaning of specific base words, prefixes and suffixes, as they work with them in discussion and research. Learning lists of these is of little or no value.

Words are built from the following:

The base (root) word, which gives the core meaning.
For example:

true (factual)

The prefix, which is added (fix) in front (pre) of the base word to add to its meaning or modify it in some way, such as making it negative.
For example:

Base word: true
Prefix: un – not true

The suffix, which is added (fix) after (suf, meaning below) the base word, and usually indicates the part of speech.

For example:

Base word: true (adj)
Suffix: est – truest (adj)
ism – truism (noun)
Base word: ject (throw)
Prefix: in – inject (throw in)
Suffix: ion (noun) – injection (that which is thrown in)

The suffix has important grammatical significance, as it can denote the part of speech, so enabling comprehension.

While most developed languages have systems of word building, it is the Latin and Greek languages that have given us most of our ability to continue adding to English as we require new words for technical and scientific processes. We also continue to make our language more subtle and more sophisticated by adding to words that English has adopted from other languages.

A good dictionary will show the origin of words, together with the meanings of its various parts. Exercises in finding out how we have come by some of our words can be fascinating for students as early as mid-primary. For example, the word 'companion' meaning 'comrade', is composed of:

Base word: panis (Latin) – bread
Prefix: com – together/with
Suffix: ion – noun form
Hence: com-pan-ion – one you have bread with

As less grammar has been taught in recent decades, and spelling is often not taught beyond mid-primary, many students are unaware of the connections between the two which relate chiefly to word building.

We use the system of word building to convey extra information of various kinds, by adding word parts to the beginning and end of base words, i.e. those that carry the core meaning.
For example:

The vet will inject the cow – no suffix, simple verb
The vet injected the cow – suffix 'ed', indicating past tense

The cow had an injection – suffix 'ion', indicating a noun
This medication is injectable – suffix 'able', indicates adjective (able to be)

(See Swallow, G, *Word Building*, 4th edn 2007, Nutshell Products, Kalbar, Qld.)

28.1 Activities: word building

A

1. As examples are written on the board, discuss them with the students while heading the components as shown:

Prefix	Base word	Suffix
adds to or modifies meaning	core meaning	denoting part of speech
re again	volve turn/roll	er noun

Revolver – the pistol which fires with a revolving action
Hence: revolve, evolve, revolution etc.

2. Students use the following word or word roots, changing the suffixes to denote different parts of speech.
   a. dict (speak)
   b. spect (look)
   c. volve (turn)
3. Students are given base words from which they list, in a set time, all the words they can think of that have been built on it, for example:

   spect: expect, respect, spectacles etc.

   These should be checked with discussion and one or more added to the chart.
4. Students are given whole words, which they break down and add to the chart above.
5. Students are given core words to research using a dictionary, for example:

   ostracise, ballot, shampoo, frankincense, dollar

Checklist: word building

C

Students should now be able to:

- explain clearly the term 'word building'
- name the three main word parts described in word building
- explain the function of a prefix, a suffix and a root (or base word)
- recognise and give the meaning of some common prefixes such as re, sub, com/con
- recognise and state the meaning of common suffixes such as ed, ment
- divide common words into prefixes, roots and suffixes
- use a dictionary to discover the structure of words containing these elements

29 Improve the way you speak and write

Due to a number of highly debated factors, some ungrammatical forms of English have become common and in due course may, by default, be regarded as acceptable usage. This is a pity, because, by being grammatically inconsistent, they provide obstacles for those, particularly of non-English speaking origin, who wish to learn correct English. However, this is a phenomenon that has bothered both teachers and students for generations. The language is *living* – so it happens!

Suffice it, therefore, to point out some of these anomalies and leave it to our students to adapt them or not. Others are clearly examples of bad language, unacceptable to those who wish to be, and be seen to be, well-educated.

The following list explains some common grammatical errors.

Confusion between words

I – me

I is the subject of a verb, *me* is the object of a verb or preposition (see page 101)

I rang Mavis; Mavis rang *me*.

They were very grateful to James and *me*.

he – him

He is the subject of a verb, *him* the object (see page 102).

He rang Colin; Colin rang *him*.
He and *I* both went to the party.
Colin took *him* and *me* with *him*.

who – whom

Who is the subject of a verb, *whom* is the object (see pages 139, 164).

I know *who* he is.
Whom did you see?
To *whom* did you give the money?

it's – its

It's is a contraction of 'it is' (see page 80).

It's at the top of the charts.

Its is a possessive pronoun such as *yours* and *theirs*, or more frequently a possessive adjective. It has no apostrophe (see page 129).

Its cover is worn out.

different to, from or than

To differ means to 'carry apart' so, logically, 'from' is the only correct sequel. How could you carry something apart *to* something else? However, 'different to' is commonly heard in many places.

'Different than' is not only logically, but also grammatically, incorrect, as 'than' introduces the second part of a *mentioned* comparison, e.g. Ben is taller than Mark (is).

less – fewer

Less is for amounts that cannot be numbered, *fewer* for things one can count (see page 129).

We had *less* money this year.
We bought *fewer* presents at Christmas.

between – among

Between distinguishes two things, *among* more than two.

Between you and me …
You must choose *among* your many friends.

farther – further

Farther relates to distance, *further* means in addition.

I can't walk any *farther* today.
We must discuss this idea *further*.

historic – historical

Historic means significant in history, *historical* relating to history.

The breaking down of the Berlin Wall was *historic*.
These are *historical* documents.

a – an

A is used before a word beginning with a consonant, *an* before a word beginning with a vowel.

This is *a* great occasion – it is *a* historic occasion.
That was *an* awesome event.
He is *an* honest man.

If the *h* is sounded, then, being a consonant, it is preceded by *a*. However, if the *h* is silent or omitted, as in French pronunciation, then *an* is appropriate, i.e. *an* hour, but *a* hotel.

if – whether

If, meaning 'on condition that' is a conjunction which introduces an adverbial clause of condition. *Whether* introduces a noun clause and usually offers an alternative.

He will be in trouble *if* he is caught.
I wonder *whether* (or not) he will be expelled.

try to – try and

refers to the action it governs, *try and* … implies two separate actions.

Try to write neatly; *try to* do your best.
Try and try again.

lie – lay

Lie is an intransitive verb with *lay* as its past tense.

I *lie* down every afternoon.
Yesterday, the dog *lay* down with me.

Lay is a transitive verb, with *laid* as its past tense.

Please *lay* the table properly.
Yesterday you *laid* it untidily.

Past tense and past participle

I done it – I did it

This is an error of tense resulting from confusion between the past tense and the past participle (see pages 117–8). Here the past tense is required:

He did it.

Other verb forms similary misused:

We brang our books for we *brought*.
I aren't going for *I am not* or *I'm not*.
I could have went for I could have *gone*.

Double negatives

In maths, we learn that two minuses make a plus. Logically, in language likewise, two negatives make a positive.

So: we did*n't* have *no* water, means we did have (some) water.

We're *not* going *no*where, means we are going somewhere.

Similarly:

We did*n't* have *hardly any* rain.

Hardly or *hardly an*y mean scarcely, so the implication above is that the rain wasn't scarce.

Double comparatives

The suffix 'er' and the preceding qualifier 'more' have the same meaning but we choose the most suitable for the context. We cannot use both together.

not He is *more hungrier* than a wolf.
but He is *hungrier* than a wolf (is).
or He is *more hungry* than a wolf.

Similarly, with superlatives:

not We saw the *most skinniest* boy.
but We saw the *skinniest* boy.

Similarly, we should avoid using comparative adjectives such as *more* or *very* in addition to words that carry a superlative meaning within themselves.

not It was a very unique show.
but It was a unique show.

Redundant adverbs

Adding redundant adverbs is not only a form of repitition but it also diminishes the force of the verb itself. This addition appears to be made as a substitute for an object when the verb is being used intransitively (without an object).

Verb	Dictionary meaning	Superfluous adverb (to be avoided)
continue	maintain/carry on/resume	on
The discussion *continued* for two more hours.		
head	take the lead position/direct	up
Tony will *head* the commission of enquiry.		
progress	move forward	along
The meeting *progressed* as planned.		
report	re (back) port (carry): bring back (an account)	back
You must *report* to the principal.		
separate	part/divide	out
Separate the socks.		
train	guide to a specific goal	up
We need to *train* more apprentices.		

Ask yourself whether the meaning of the adverb has already been expressed in the verb itself. If so, the adverb is superfluous.

30 A final word

While aiming for correctness and excellence in the use of our language, it would be a mistake to be over restrictive. Language has a wonderful way of evolving and adapting to its ever-changing needs, and the way to enjoy it is to revel in its variety.

Apart from the abundance of vocabulary in English, which has resulted from historical invasions, and its flexibility resulting from the ability and enterprise of its users in coining new words, English embraces a profusion of idioms and expressions.

Idiom – from Greek *idioma* meaning 'specific property' – refers to special phrasing in which the meaning of the whole does not conform with the meaning expressed by its separate elements. For example, to hold one's horses, meaning to delay one's action, now has nothing to do with literally holding a horse.

Some idioms, such as the phrase 'going to', meaning intention, as in 'I was going to go', or the phrase 'well I never' appear to offend the propriety of grammar. These are commonplace to native English speakers, but raise problems for foreign learners. Yet, it would be a big mistake for us to believe that English is alone in having a profusion of such expressions. Almost all languages, even obscure tribal languages, are vividly enriched by them. In some cases they arise from the need for a new word or expression.

As with linguistic embellishments and idiosyncrasies, idioms are learnt by familiarity and use, and are relished by learners of English who wish to speak and write fluently. Lessons in various forms of imagery including idioms and new words, can be both interesting and instructive. Students may enjoy making their own collections, or researching the origins of such expressions as 'call

it a day', 'throw in the towel', 'kick the bucket', 'lose the plot', 'put a sock in it', 'wipe one's hands of something'.

Language, like clothing, is also subject to fashion. In a letter to Adam Fitz-Adam in 1753, an essayist known as A.B. defended him against the criticism of Edward Moore: 'Your inaccuracies, as he calls them, are the characteristics of a polite writer … Away with pedantry and the grammar! Write like a gentleman, and with Pope, in his essay upon critics, Snatch a grace beyond the reach of nature …'

So – it is the challenging and rewarding task of a teacher to expose to students all aspects of our wonderful language while tutoring them in the appropriateness of their use, for to write well is to show respect to your reader.



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Glossary

Definitions are also given for each grammar term under its respective section category. Below are short definitions of terms as used in this book.

abbreviation: that which cannot be seen or touched, i.e. not concrete

accusative: of case, identifying the direct object

active: of voice, describes a verb in which the subject is responsible for the action

adjectival: concerning, or having the function of an adjective

adjective: a word that describes (qualifies) a noun or pronoun

adverb: a word that gives information about (modifies) a verb

adverbial: concerning or having the function of an adverb

analysis: the division of a sentence into its constituents

apostrophe: a punctuation mark indicating possession, or omission (contraction)

article: the words *a*, *an*, *the*, indicating any one of something, or a specific one

auxiliary: of a verb, a helper, usually accompanying an infinite verb, in order to form a finite tense

brackets: punctuation marks, showing parenthesis, and enclosing information additional to the structure of a sentence

capital: of letters, upper case

case: term denoting the function of a noun or pronoun in a sentence

clause: a group of words, including a finite verb, forming all or part of a sentence

collective: of a noun, denoting a word in the singular, given to a group of something

colon: a punctuation mark indicating additional information to follow

comma: a punctuation mark which serves to separate part of a sentence, and indicating a pause

common: category of noun applied to things which are common to a group, i.e. not a particular one

comparison: that which compares

complement: a word or group of words completing the sense of any form of the verb 'to be', and being, or referring to, the same person or thing that is the subject of the verb

complex: of a sentence which includes one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses

compound: of a word, two words put together to form a third word; of a sentence, one consisting of two or more main clauses

compound-complex: of a sentence, one consisting of more than one main clause, plus one or more subordinate clauses

concession: of a phrase or clause, that which concedes or admits a possible happening

condition: of a phrase or clause, that which depends for its fulfilment on something else happening

conjunction: a word that links two things, or introduces a subordinate, adverbial or noun clause

continuous: of tense, expressing continuous action

dashes: punctuation marks in the form of short lines, that separate a piece of information from the remaining part of the sentence – usually less formal than brackets

dative: of case, the part of a sentence forming the indirect object indicated by 'to' or 'for' someone or something

definite: of article, *the*

degree: a level of comparison applied to gradable adjectives or adverbs

demonstrative: of adjectives or pronouns, indicating particular items, e.g. *this* …

determinant: (or determiners) modern term generally referring to articles and various kinds of adjectives

direct: of speech, the exact words spoken, marked with inverted commas

direct object: that part of the sentence which is acted upon by the verb

distributive: of pronouns, referring to an individual member of a class or group, e.g. *each*

emphasis: of speech, the stress given to a particular part of a sentence for additional meaning

exclamation mark: a punctuation mark, following a word or phrase that shows strong feeling such as surprise or horror

feminine: of gender, pertaining to female

finite: of a verb, a form that is complete in tense and has a subject

full-stop: (or period) a punctuation mark at the end of a statement or command

future: of a verb, the tense relating to something yet to happen

gender: the distinction between masculine, feminine or neuter

genitive: of mood, the form of a sentence which denotes possession

gerund: a participle, having the function of a noun

idiom: a phrase of which the meaning cannot be deduced from the words that comprise it

imperative: of mood, the verb form of a sentence that constitutes a command

indefinite: of article, *a* or *an*; of pronouns, those which are non-specific, e.g. *someone*

indicative: of mood, the verb form of a statement

indirect: of object, that person or thing indirectly affected by the action of the verb; of speech, that which is reported to have been spoken, by someone addressing a third party

infinitive: the form of a verb that shows no tense and has no subject, often preceded by 'to' as in 'to be'

inflexion: that action by which various spelling forms such as affixes alter the meaning of a word, as in break, breakable

interjection: an exclamation, one word or several denoting shock or other strong emotion

interrogative: of a pronoun, adjective or adverb, introducing a question; of a sentence, a question

intonation: of speech, the tone which helps to convey meaning

intransitive: of a verb, one that does not have an object

inverted commas: (quotation marks) punctuation marks that enclose direct speech

irregular: of a verb, one which in speech or pronunciation does not conform to the usual pattern, such as one which changes its inside vowel according to tense

limit: of adverbs, modify

manner: of adverbial phrases and clauses, that modify a verb according to the way in which the action of the verb takes place

masculine: of gender, pertaining to male

mood: of a verb, showing its form according to the kind of sentence, e.g. imperative, subjunctive

neuter: of gender, pertaining to that which is neither masculine or feminine

nominative: of case, identifying the subject of a sentence

non-finite: of a verb, the form that is not complete, and cannot take a subject

noun: the name for a person, place or thing

numeral: to do with number

object: the part of a sentence which is acted upon or affected by the action of the verb

parentheses: brackets or dashes enclosing information additional to the basic sentence

parse: to separate a sentence into its individual components, usually by naming them according to their function

part of speech: one of the eight categories of words, nominated according to their function in a sentence

participle: part of a verb tense which can take the function of other parts of speech

passive: of voice, describing a verb, the subject of which suffers the action of that verb

past: of a verb, the tense relating to something which has already happened

perfect: of tense, relating to an action completed in the past

person: of a verb, relating to the subject such as I (singular), they (plural)

personal: of a pronoun, that which shows person, gender and number

phrase: a group of words without a finite verb, qualifying a noun, modifying a verb or having the function of a noun

place: of a phrase or clause, indicating where the action of the verb takes place

pluperfect: of tense, relating to an action that was already complete at some time in the past

plural: of nouns or pronouns, indicating a number that is more than one

possessive: of nouns, pronouns or adjectives, indicating ownership

predicate: all of a sentence or clause, not including the subject

prefix: word element added in front of a base word to modify meaning

preposition: a part of speech showing the relationship of one noun or pronoun to another, usually preceding the word it governs, to form a phrase

present: of a verb, the tense indicating something taking place currently

principal: of a clause, main

pronoun: part of speech which takes the place of a noun to prevent repetition or ambiguity

proper: of a noun, the name or title given to an individual or a particular place, or thing

purpose: of a phrase or clause, indicating intention

qualify: of adjectives, adjectival phrases or clauses, to tell more about a noun or pronoun

question: the kind of sentence that pre-supposes an answer

question mark: the punctuation mark which ends a question, instead of a full stop

reason: of an adverbial phrase or clause, indicating why the action of the verb in the main clause takes place

reflexive: of pronouns which have 'self' (singular) or 'selves' (plural) added for emphasis

regular: of verbs, conforming to the common patterns of tense formation

relative: of pronouns, introducing adjectival or noun clauses, and referring to the same subject as that mentioned in another clause

result: of a phrase or clause, indicating something occurring due to the action of a verb in another clause

semi-colon: a punctuation mark used instead of a conjunction to provide a pause, and to link two closely related parts of a sentence

sentence: a group of words including a finite verb and expressing a complete idea; it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark

simple: of a sentence, consisting only of one main clause; of tense, of which the action is not continuous

singular: of nouns or pronouns, indicating single number, i.e. one only

strong: of verbs, irregular – the inside vowel changes in the past tense

subject: the person or thing that performs or suffers the action of the verb; necessary to form a finite verb

subjunctive: of mood, the verb form that expresses doubt, wish or supposition

subordinate: of a clause, adjectival, adverbial or noun, that is dependent on the main clause and cannot stand alone

suffix: word element added to the end of a base word to indicate part of speech

tense: of a verb, the form which shows the time at which the action of the verb takes place

time: of a phrase or clause, indicating something which occurs at the time at which the action of the verb in the main clause takes place

transitive: of a verb, one which has an object

verb: part of speech expressing doing, being or having

vocative: of case, a word such as a name, addressing someone

voice: of a verb, indicating active or passive

weak: of a verb, the past tense of which ends with 'd', 't' or 'ed' in a regular form

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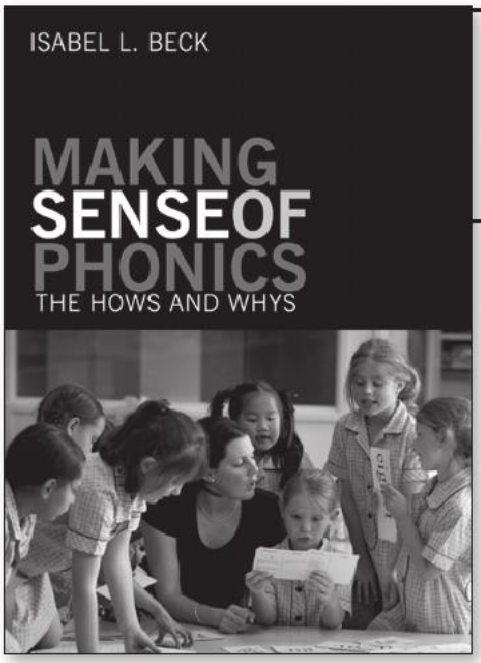
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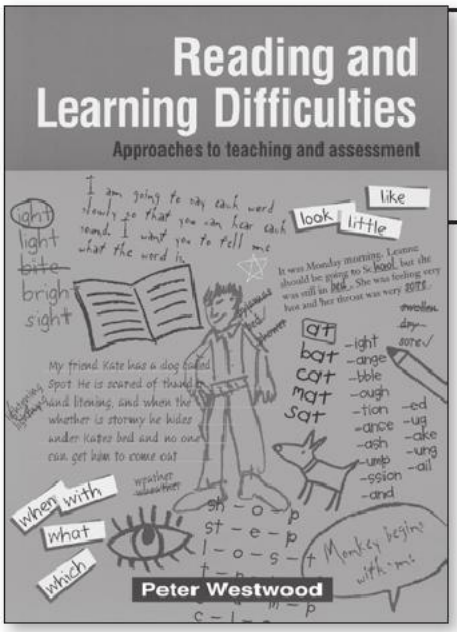
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About the author

Isabel L. Beck, PhD, is Professor of Education in the School of Education and Senior Scientist at the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh.

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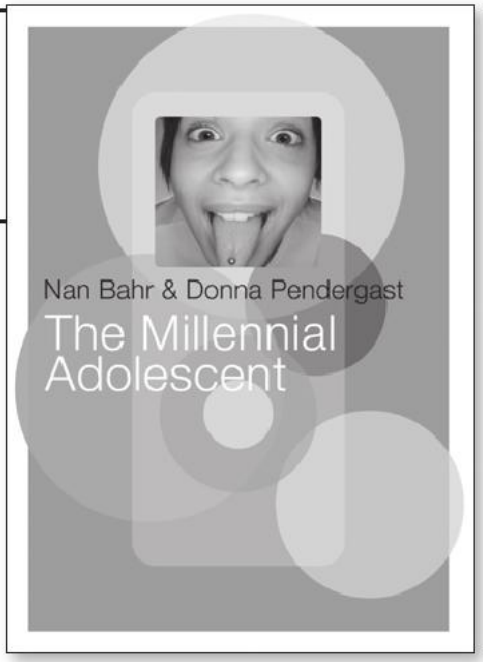
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